اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا

Quran English Translation and Tafseer
Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi

Surah – 5 Al-Maidah (The Table Spread)

سُوْرَةُ الْمَآئِدَةِ مَدَنِيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

(In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate)

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اَوْفُوْا بِالْعُقُوْدِ ۭ اُحِلَّتْ لَكُمْ بَهِيْمَةُ الْاَنْعَامِ اِلَّا مَا يُتْلٰى عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرَ مُحِلِّي الصَّيْدِ وَاَنْتُمْ حُرُمٌ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيْدُ ۝١

(5-1) Believers! Honor your bonds! [1] All grazing beasts of the flock [2] are permitted to you except those which are recited to you hereinafter, but you are not allowed to hunt in the state of Ihram (a state of pilgrim sanctity). [3] Indeed Allah decrees as He wills. [4]

(1) People should abide by the limitations and prohibitions laid down in this surah and elsewhere in the law of God. This brief introductory statement is followed by an enunciation of those prohibitions which people are required to observe.

(2) The Arabic word Anam (cattle) denotes camels, oxen, sheep and goats, whereas the word bahimah means all grazing quadrupeds. Had God said that anam had been made lawful for them, this permission would have included only those animals to which the term anam is applicable. But the terms in which the injunction is conveyed are bahimat al-anam (all grazing beasts of the flock). Hence the permission is of wider import and embraces all grazing quadrupeds of the cattle type, i.e. which do not possess canine teeth, which feed on plants rather than animals, and which resemble the cattle found in Arabia in other characteristics. This implies that the flesh of those animals which have canine teeth and are carnivorous is not permissible. This implication was elucidated by the Prophet (peace be on him) and is embodied in a tradition in which he prohibited those beasts which kill and eat other animals. Likewise, the Prophet (peace be on him) also prohibited birds with claws and those that feed on carrion. According to a tradition transmitted by Ibn 'Abbas: "The Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) prohibited all beasts with

canine teeth and all birds with claws.' (Bukhari, 'Dhaba'ih', 28, 29; 'Tibb', 53; Abu Da'ud, 'At'imah', 32; Tirmidhi, 'At'imah', 9, 11; Muslim, 'Sayd', 11-16; Nasa'i, 'Sayd wa Dhaba'ih', 28, 30, 33; Ibn Majah, 'Sayd', 13; etc. - Ed.)

(3) Ihram is the name of the simple apparel worn at the time of Pilgrimage. In every direction around the Ka'bah, there are certain fixed points beyond which no Pilgrim may proceed without donning this special Pilgrim's garment in place of his normal clothes. This apparel consists of two sheets of untailored cloth, one of which is wrapped around the lower part of the body while the other is thrown over the upper part. This manner of dressing is termed ihram because once a man has assumed it he must treat as prohibited a number of things which are ordinarily lawful, for example either shaving or trimming the hair, or using perfumes and other items of toiletry and the gratification of sexual desires. These restrictions also extend to both killing and hunting, and to leading anyone else to either kill or hunt an animal.

(4) God is the absolute sovereign and has absolute authority to issue whatever command He might will. His creatures do not have the right to complain about any of these orders. Even though wisdom (hikmah) underlies the ordinances of God, a true believer does not obey them because he considers them either appropriate or conducive to his best interests. He obeys them simply because they are the ordinances of his Lord. He holds unlawful all that God has declared unlawful, because God has so decreed it; whatever He has declared lawful is regarded as such for no other reason than that God, the Lord of all, has allowed His servants the use of it. Hence the Qur'an establishes very firmly the principle that nothing except permission from the Lord - or lack of it - is to be taken into consideration in deciding what is lawful and what is not.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تُحِلُّوْا شَعَآئِرَ اللّٰهِ وَ لَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَ لَا الْهَدْيَ وَ لَا الْقَلَآئِدَ وَ لَآ آٰمِّيْنَ الْبَيْتَ الْحَرَامَ يَبْتَغُوْنَ فَضْلًا مِّنْ رَّبِّهِمْ وَ رِضْوَانًا ؕ وَ اِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوْا ؕ وَ لَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ اَنْ صَدُّوْكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ اَنْ تَعْتَدُوْا ۘ وَ تَعَاوَنُوْا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَ التَّقْوٰى ۪ وَ لَا تَعَاوَنُوْا عَلَى الْاِثْمِ وَ الْعُدْوَانِ ۪ وَ اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ ۝٢

(5-2) Believers! Neither desecrate the symbols of (devotion to) Allah, [5] nor the holy month, nor the animals of offering, nor the animals wearing collars indicating they are for sacrifice, nor ill-treat those who have set out for the Holy House seeking from their Lord His bounty and good pleasure. [6] But once you are free from Pilgrimage obligations, you are free to hunt. [7] Do not let your wrath against the people who have barred you from the Holy Mosque move you to commit undue transgressions; [8] rather, help one another in acts of righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and transgression. Fear Allah. Surely Allah is severe in retribution.

(5) Whatever characteristically represents either a particular doctrine, creed, way of thought or conduct is recognized as its symbol. For example, official flags, uniforms of the armed forces, coins, notes and stamps are symbols used by governments so that their subjects - in fact all those who live within their sphere of influence - treat them with proper respect. Cathedrals, altars and crosses are symbols of Christianity. A special bunch of hair on the head, a special kind of bead-rosary and the temple are symbols of Hinduism. A turban, bracelet and Kirpan (a special dagger kept by the Sikhs) are symbols of the Sikh religion. The hammer and sickle are the symbols of Communism. The swastika has been the symbol of Aryan racialism. The followers of these ideologies are required to treat these symbols with respect. If a man insults any symbol associated with a particular ideology it is regarded as an act of hostility; and if the person concerned is himself a follower of that ideology then that insult is considered tantamount to an abandonment of, and a revolt against it.

The expression 'sha'a'ir Allah' refers to all those rites which, in opposition to polytheism and outright disbelief and atheism, are the characteristic symbols of an exclusive devotion to God. Muslims are required to respect these symbols, regardless of the people among whom they are found, provided their underlying spirit is one of godliness and that they have not been tainted by either polytheistic or pagan associations. Hence, whenever a Muslim encounters something in either the creed or practice of a non-Muslim, which embodies any element of

devotion and service to the One True God, he will identify himself with it and show respect to the symbols which represent it. For this true element in their religious life constitutes the point of agreement between them and the Muslims. The point of dispute is not that they serve God, but that they associate others in that service.

It should be recalled that this directive to treat the symbols of God with due respect was given at a time when a state of belligerency existed between the Muslims and the polytheists of Arabia, and Makka was under the occupation of the latter. Polytheistic tribes from all over Arabia used to visit the Kabah for Pilgrimage, and the routes of many of these tribes were within the reach-of the Muslims if they decided to attack. It was in such circumstances that the Muslims were told that, even though those people were polytheists, they should not be molested if they were proceeding towards the 'House of God'; that they should not be attacked during the months of Pilgrimage; and that the animals which they were carrying for sacrificial offering should not be touched. The element of godliness which persisted in their otherwise distorted religious life deserved to be respected.

(6) Following a general directive that the symbols of God should be treated with proper respect a few such symbols are mentioned specifically lest war fever lead even to the desecration of religious rites and symbols. The enumeration of these particular symbols does not mean that respect is due to these alone.

(7) Ihram is also one of the symbols of God and violation of any of the prohibitions which should be observed in that state is an act of sacrilege. The prohibition of hunting while in the state of ihram is mentioned in connection with the desecration of the symbols of God. When ihram is over, the prohibitions become void, and one is permitted to hunt.

(8) The unbelievers had prevented the Muslims from visiting the Kabah. In fact, in violation of the ancient usage of Arabia they had even deprived them of their right to make Pilgrimage. As a

result, the Muslims felt inclined to prevent the pagan tribes from making their pilgrimage by not letting them pass along the routes to Makka which lay close to the Islamic domains, and to attack their trading caravans during the time of Pilgrimage (Hajj). God prevented them from carrying out this plan through the revelation.

حُرِّمَتۡ عَلَيۡكُمُ ٱلۡمَيۡتَةُ وَٱلدَّمُ وَلَحۡمُ ٱلۡخِنزِيرِ وَمَآ أُهِلَّ لِغَيۡرِ ٱللَّهِ بِهِۦ وَٱلۡمُنۡخَنِقَةُ وَٱلۡمَوۡقُوذَةُ وَٱلۡمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَٱلنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَآ أَكَلَ ٱلسَّبُعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيۡتُمۡ وَمَا ذُبِحَ عَلَى ٱلنُّصُبِ وَأَن تَسۡتَقۡسِمُواْ بِٱلۡأَزۡلَٰمِۚ ذَٰلِكُمۡ فِسۡقٌۗ ٱلۡيَوۡمَ يَئِسَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِن دِينِكُمۡ فَلَا تَخۡشَوۡهُمۡ وَٱخۡشَوۡنِۚ ٱلۡيَوۡمَ أَكۡمَلۡتُ لَكُمۡ دِينَكُمۡ وَأَتۡمَمۡتُ عَلَيۡكُمۡ نِعۡمَتِي وَرَضِيتُ لَكُمُ ٱلۡإِسۡلَٰمَ دِينٗاۚ فَمَنِ ٱضۡطُرَّ فِي مَخۡمَصَةٍ غَيۡرَ مُتَجَانِفٖ لِّإِثۡمٖ فَإِنَّ ٱللَّهَ غَفُورٞ رَّحِيمٞ ٣

(5-3) Forbidden to you are carrion, [9] blood, the flesh of swine, the animal slaughtered in any name other than Allah's, [10] the animal which has either been strangled, killed by blows, has died of a fall, by goring or that devoured by a beast of prey - unless it be that which you yourselves might have slaughtered while it was still alive [11] - and that which was slaughtered at the altars. [12] - [13] You are also forbidden to seek knowledge of your fate by divining arrows. [14] All these are sinful acts. This day the unbelievers have fully despaired of your religion. Do not fear them; but fear Me. [15] This day I have perfected for you your religion, and have bestowed upon you My bounty in full measure, and have been pleased to assign for you Islam as your religion. (Follow, then, the lawful and unlawful bounds enjoined upon you.) [16] As for he who is driven by hunger, without being willfully inclined to sin, surely Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate. [17]

(9) 'Carrion' signifies the animal which has died a natural death.

(10) This refers to the practice of pronouncing the name of anyone or anything other than God and dedicating the animal, as an offering, to either a holy personage, god or goddess before slaughtering. (For details see Towards Understanding the Qur'an, vol. I, (Surah 2, n. 171.)

(11) It is lawful to eat the flesh of an animal which may have suffered from any of the above-mentioned accidents providing it was still alive until slaughtered. This verse also makes it clear that the flesh of an animal becomes lawful only by slaughtering ritually, and that no other method of killing is valid. The words dhabh and dhakah belong to the technical terminology of Islam and denote slitting the throat so that the blood is completely drained from the animal's body. The disadvantage of killing an animal by either guillotine or strangulation is that the greater part of the blood remains within the body, and at various places it sticks to the flesh and forms congealed lumps. If an animal is slaughtered by slitting the throat, on the other hand, the connection between mind and body remains intact for a short while, with the result that the blood is thoroughly drained out from all the veins and the flesh becomes fully cleansed of blood. We have just come across the injunction prohibiting the eating of blood. So only that flesh which has been purged of blood is declared lawful.

(12) The word nusub signifies all the places consecrated for offerings to others than the One True God, regardless of whether they are images of wood, stone or something else.

(13) The division of objects of eating and drinking into lawful and unlawful is based on their moral rather than their medicinal properties. God has left matters relating to the physical world to be tackled by man's own effort and striving. It is for man himself to discover by his own efforts which items of food and drink provide him with healthy nourishment and which are useless and harmful. The Law (Shari'ah) does not take upon itself to guide man in such matters. Had it undertaken such a task, perhaps one of the first things for it to do would have been to pronounce the prohibition of arsenic oxide. But one will notice that the Qur'an and Hadith mention neither arsenic oxide nor other things which either singly or jointly are fatal for man. The underlying considerations of the Law with regard to the various items of eating and drinking are their possible effects on man's morals and on the purity of his soul. This is in addition to the judgements that the Law makes with regard to the various means adopted by man

in his quest for food - whether they are appropriate according to Islamic standards or not. It is impossible for man to determine what is beneficial and what is harmful for his morals; he has not been endowed with the capacities needed to arrive at sound conclusions on these matters, and so he frequently stumbles into error. Hence the Law undertakes to guide him in these matters and these matters alone. Whatever has been prohibited by Islam has been prohibited because of its bad effects on human morals, because of its repugnance to spiritual purity, and because of its association with false beliefs. Things which have been declared lawful have been so declared because they are untainted by these evils.

It may be asked why God did not specify the considerations underlying the prohibition of various things for this would have afforded us very valuable insights. In reply, it must be pointed out that it is impossible for us to fully grasp such considerations. The kind of questions we face are for instance: What are the corrupting effects of the consumption of either blood or the flesh of swine and carrion on our morals? The extent to which this corruption affects our morals, and the way in which certain things affect our morals is a matter that we are incapable of investigating, for we do not possess the means of weighing and measuring the moral properties of various things. To mention some of these bad effects would carry little weight with the sceptic, for how could he test the soundness of statements on such questions? Hence, God considers faith rather than man's own judgement as the main basis for observing the standards of lawfulness and prohibition. Whoever is fully convinced that the Qur'an is the Book of God, that the Prophet (peace be on him) was designated by Him, and that God is All-Knowing and All-Wise, will necessarily commit himself to observe the restrictions enjoined by God regardless of whether he is able to grasp the wisdom underlying them or not. Whoever lacks this basic conviction will avoid only those evils which are fully evident to human beings, and will remain a prey to all those which have not yet become apparent but which in fact are intrinsically harmful.

(14) The things which are prohibited in this verse fall into the following categories:

(1) Polytheistic divination, which is a form of omen-seeking whereby knowledge either about one's future or about matters beyond human perception, is sought from gods and goddesses. The polytheists of Makka had consecrated the idol Hubal in the Kabah for this purpose. Seven arrows had been placed at its altars and on each of them different words and sentences had been inscribed. Whenever people were faced with the question whether a certain course was wise or not, or they wanted to trace something lost, or sought a judgement in a murder case, or had other similar problems, they would approach the oracle of Hubal, present him with an offering as his fee, and pray to Hubal to issue a verdict on the question concerned. Then the oracle would draw arrows, and the inscription on the arrow which fell to a person's lot was deemed to represent the verdict of Hubal.

(2) Superstitious divination, which has also been prohibited, means that instead of deciding the problems of life in a rational way one should decide them on fanciful grounds. Or it could mean deciding matters by arbitrary interpretation of accidental events, or to have one's future prophesied by means which have not been reasonably established as adequate for obtaining knowledge about the future. This includes geomancy, astrology, fortune-telling and the numerous other methods adopted to determine omens.

(3) Games of chance are also prohibited and include all those transactions in which what one receives depends on chance and other purely accidental factors rather than on rational considerations such as either due payment or recompense for services rendered. This applies, for instance, to lotteries where the holder of an arbitrarily-drawn number receives a huge amount of money which has been obtained from thousands of other people. It also applies to crossword puzzles were the award of prizes does not depend on the actual correctness of the solution (since several correct solutions are possible) but on accidental conformity with the particular solution which is arbitrarily chosen as the only correct one by the sponsors of the puzzle. After

prohibiting each of these three categories, the only kind of lot-drawing which Islam permits is that which one resorts to when obliged to make a decision either in favor of one of numerous permissible options or in favor of one out of two or more equally legitimate claimants. For instance, two persons have an equal claim over a thing which neither of them is prepared to relinquish, and at the same time there is no reasonable basis for preferring one to the other. In such a case, with the consent of the claimants, the matter may be settled by drawing lots. The Prophet (peace be on him) himself used to resort to drawing lots when he had to make a decision between two equal claimants, and when preferring one of them would cause distress and grievance to the other. (For such instances see Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 4, p. 373; Bukhari, 'Nikah', 97 and 'Shahadat', 30; Muslim, 'Fada'il al-Sahabah', 88; Ibn Majah, 'Ahkam', 20, etc. - Ed.)

(15) 'This day', here, does not signify a particular day or specific date. It refers to that period of time when these verses were revealed. In our own usage, too, expressions like 'today' or 'this day' often have the sense of the 'present time'. 'This day the unbelievers have fully despaired of your religion' refers to the fact that the Muslims' religion had developed into a full-fledged system of life, reinforced by the authority and governmental power which it had acquired. The unbelievers who had hitherto resisted its establishment now despaired of destroying Islam and of forcing the believers back to their former state of Ignorance. The believers therefore no longer needed to fear men: they should fear God alone instead. Indeed, the Muslims were repeatedly asked to fear God, for they would not be treated lightly if they failed to carry out His commands, especially as there was no longer any justifiable excuse for such failure. If they still violated the law of God, there could be no basis for supposing that they did so under constraint: it must mean that they simply had no intention of obeying Him.

(16) The 'perfection of religion' mentioned in this verse refers to making it a self-sufficient system of belief and conduct, and an order of social life providing its own answers to the questions with which man is confronted. This system contains all necessary

guidance for man, either by expounding fundamental principles from which detailed directives can be deduced or by spelling out such directives explicitly so that in no circumstances would one need to look for guidance to any extraneous source.

The bounty referred to in the statement: 'I have bestowed upon you My bounty in full measure', is the bounty of true guidance.

The statement: 'I have been pleased to assign for you Islam as your religion' means that, since the Muslims had proved by their conduct and their striving that they were honest and sincere about the commitment they had made to God in embracing Islam - the commitment to serve and obey Him - He had accepted their sincerity and created conditions in which they were no longer yoked in bondage to anyone but Him. Thus the Muslims were not prevented from living in submission to God out of extraneous constraints just as there were no constraints preventing them from subscribing to true beliefs. Having recounted these favors, God does not point out what should be the proper response to those favors. But the implication is obvious: the only appropriate response on the part of the believers must be unstinting observance of the law of God out of gratitude to Him.

According to authentic traditions this verse was revealed in 10 A.H. on the occasion of the Prophet's Farewell Pilgrimage. The context however, seems to indicate that it was revealed soon after the conclusion of the Treaty of Hudaybiyah (i.e. in 6 A.H.). All parts of the discourse in which this verse occurs are so tightly interwoven and so closely inter-connected that it hardly seems conceivable that it should have been inserted here several years later. My own estimate - and true knowledge of this lies with God alone - is that this verse was originally revealed in its present context (i.e. commenting upon the conditions prevailing at the time of the Treaty of Hudaybiyah). It is conceivable that the true significance of the verse was not then fully appreciated. But later on, when Islam prevailed over the whole of Arabia and the power

of Islam reached a high point, God once again revealed this sentence to His Messenger and ordered him to proclaim it.

(17) See Towards Understanding the Qur'an, vol. I, (Surah 2, n. 172).

يَسْـَٔلُوْنَكَ مَاذَآ اُحِلَّ لَهُمْ ۭ قُلْ اُحِلَّ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبٰتُ ۙ وَمَا عَلَّمْتُمْ مِّنَ الْجَوَارِحِ مُكَلِّبِيْنَ تُعَلِّمُوْنَهُنَّ مِمَّا عَلَّمَكُمُ اللّٰهُ ۡ فَكُلُوْا مِمَّآ اَمْسَكْنَ عَلَيْكُمْ وَاذْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْهِ ۠ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ سَرِيْعُ الْحِسَابِ ۝۴

(5-4) They ask you what has been made lawful to them. Say: 'All clean things have been made lawful to you, (18) and such hunting animals as you teach, training them to hunt, teaching them the knowledge Allah has given you - you may eat what they catch for you (19) - but invoke the name of Allah on it. (20) Have fear of Allah (in violating His Law). Allah is swift in His reckoning.'

(18) There is a certain subtlety in how the query is answered. Religious- minded people often fall into a prohibitionist mentality by tending to regard as unlawful everything not expressly declared as lawful. This makes them excessively fastidious and over-suspicious, and inclined to ask for a complete list of all that is lawful and permitted. The Qur'an's response to this question seems to be aimed, in the first place, at the reform of this mentality. The questioners want a list of what is lawful so they can treat everything else as prohibited, but the Qur'an provides them with a list of what is prohibited and then leaves them with the guiding principle that all 'clean things' are lawful. This means a complete reversal of the old religious outlook according to which everything that has not been declared lawful is considered prohibited. This was a great reform, and it liberated human life from many unnecessary constraints. Henceforth, except for a few prohibitions, the lawful domain embraced virtually everything.

The lawfulness of things has been tied, however, to the stipulation of their being clean so that no one can argue for the lawfulness of things which are unclean. The question which arises at this point is: How are we to determine which things are clean? The answer is that everything is clean apart from those things

which can be reckoned unclean either according to any of the principles embodied in the Law or which are repellent to man's innate sense of good taste or which civilized human beings have generally found offensive to their natural feelings of cleanliness and decency.

(19) The expression 'hunting animals' signifies hounds, cheetahs, hawks and all those beasts and birds which men use in hunting. It is a characteristic of animals which have been trained to hunt that they hold the prey for their masters rather than devour it. It is for this reason that while the catch of these trained animals is lawful, that of others is prohibited.

There is some disagreement among the jurists as to the hunting animals whose catch is lawful. Some jurists are of the opinion that if the hunting animal, whether bird or beast, eats any part of the game, it becomes prohibited since the act of eating signifies that the animal hunted for its own sake rather than for the sake of its master. This is the doctrine of Shafi'i. Other jurists hold that the prey is not rendered unlawful even if the hunting animal has eaten part of the game; even if it has devoured one-third of the animal, the consumption of the remaining two-thirds is lawful, irrespective of whether the hunting animal is a bird or a beast. This is the view of Malik. A third group of jurists is of the opinion that if the hunting animal which has eaten part of the game is a beast it becomes prohibited, but not so if the hunting animal is a bird. The reason for this distinction is that hunting beasts can be trained to hold the game for their master whereas experience shows that hunting birds are not fully capable of receiving such instruction. This is the opinion of Abu Hanifah and his disciples. 'Ali, however, is of the opinion that it is unlawful to eat the catch of hunting birds because they cannot be trained to refrain from eating the game and to hold it merely for the sake of their master. (See the commentaries of Ibn Kathir, Jassas, Ibn al-'Arabi and Qurtubi on this verse. See also Ibn Rushd, Bidayat al-Mujtahid, vol. 2, pp. 440 ff. -Ed.)

(20) They should pronounce the name of God at the time of dispatching animals to the hunt. It is mentioned in a tradition that 'Adi b. Hatim asked the Prophet (peace be on him) whether he

could use hounds for hunting. The Prophet (peace be on him) replied: 'If you have pronounced the name of God while dispatching your trained hound, eat what he has caught for, you. And if it has eaten from the game, then do not eat for I fear that the hound had caught the game for itself.' Then he inquired what should be done if one had pronounced the name of God while dispatching one's own hound, but later found another hound close to the prey. The Prophet (peace be on him) replied: 'Do not eat that, for you have pronounced the name of God on your own hound, but not on the other one.' (For relevant traditions see Bukhari, 'Dhaba'ih', 4, 10; Ibn Majah, 'Sayd', 3; Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 1, p. 231 and vol. 4, p. 195 - Ed.) The verse under discussion makes it clear that it is necessary to pronounce the name of God while dispatching a hound to the hunt. If a man later finds the prey alive he should slaughter it. But if he does not find it alive it will still be lawful to eat it since the name of God has already been pronounced. The same rule applies with regard to shooting arrows in hunting.

اَلْيَوْمَ اُحِلَّ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبٰتُ ؕ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ حِلٌّ لَّكُمْ ۖ وَطَعَامُكُمْ حِلٌّ لَّهُمْ ۫
وَالْمُحْصَنٰتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنٰتِ وَالْمُحْصَنٰتُ مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْكِتٰبَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ اِذَاۤ اٰتَيْتُمُوْهُنَّ
اُجُوْرَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِيْنَ غَيْرَ مُسٰفِحِيْنَ وَلَا مُتَّخِذِيْۤ اَخْدَانٍ ؕ وَمَنْ يَّكْفُرْ بِالْاِيْمَانِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهٗ
وَهُوَ فِى الْاٰخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخٰسِرِيْنَ ۝٥

(5-5) This day all good things have been made lawful to you. The food of the People of the Book is permitted to you, and your food is permitted to them. (21) And permitted to you are chaste women, be they either from among the believers or from among those who have received the Book before you, (22) provided you become their protectors in wedlock after paying them their bridal-due, rather than go around committing fornication and taking them as secret-companions. The work of he who refuses to follow the way of faith will go waste, and he will be among the utter losers in the Hereafter. (23)

(21) The food of the People of the Book includes the animals slaughtered by them. The rule that 'our food is lawful to them and theirs lawful to us' signifies that there need be no barriers between us and the People of the Book regarding food. We may eat with them and they with us. But this general proclamation of permission is preceded by a reiteration of the statement: 'All good

things have been made lawful to you.' This indicates that if the People of the Book either do not observe those principles of cleanliness and purity which are considered obligatory by the Law or if their food includes prohibited items, then one should abstain from eating them. If, for instance, they either slaughter an animal without pronouncing the name of God or if they slaughter it in the name of anyone else but God it is not lawful for us to eat that animal. Likewise, if intoxicating drinks, the flesh of swine, and any other prohibited thing is found on their dining table we may not justify our partaking of such items on the ground that the persons concerned are People of the Book.

The same applies to those non-Muslims who are not People of the Book, except for one difference - that whereas the animals slaughtered by the People of the Book are lawful provided they have pronounced the name of God at the time of slaughtering them, we are not permitted to eat the animals killed by non-Muslims who are not People of the Book.

(22) This expression signifies the Jews and the Christians. Of non-Muslim women, Muslims may marry only Christians and Jews, and of them only those who have been characterized as muhsanat (i.e. 'well-protected women').

There are differences among jurists as to the detailed application of this rule. The view of Ibn 'Abbas is that the expression 'People of the Book' here signifies only those People of the Book who are subjects of the Domain of Islam (Dar al-Islam). It is also unlawful to marry Jewish and Christian women who are either living in the Domain of War (Dar al-Harb) or in the Domain of Disbelief (Dar al-Kufr). The Hanafi jurists hold a slightly different opinion. Although they disapprove of marrying such women, it is not considered unlawful. Sa'id b. al-Musayyib and Hasan al-Basri are of the opinion that the verse warrants general application and hence there is no need to differentiate between those who are ahl al-Dhimmah (the non-Muslim subjects of the Islamic State) and those who are not.

There is also disagreement among the jurists about the

connotation of the term muhsanat. 'Umar considered this word to signify only those women who are chaste and possess good moral character, and hence ahl al-Kitab women who are of loose character are excluded from this permission. This is also the opinion of Hasan al-Basri, Sha'bi and Ibrahim al-Nakha'i and of the Hanafi jurists. But

Shafi'i considers this expression to have been used as an antonym of 'slave women', and hence it signifies all those ahl al-Kitab women who are not slaves. (Cf. the commentaries of Ibn Kathir, Ibn al-'Arabi and Qurtubi - Ed.)

(23) The declaration that marriage to ahl al-Kitab women is permitted is immediately followed by this warning which, in effect, means that those who avail themselves of this permission ought to be mindful of their faith and morals. They are urged to beware of infatuation with disbelieving women lest they also become enamored of the ideas and beliefs which they cherish, thereby allowing their faith to dissipate. They are warned against adopting social patterns and modes of conduct inconsistent with the true requirements of their faith.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡۤا اِذَا قُمۡتُمۡ اِلَى الصَّلٰوةِ فَاغۡسِلُوۡا وُجُوۡهَكُمۡ وَاَيۡدِيَكُمۡ اِلَى الۡمَرَافِقِ وَامۡسَحُوۡا بِرُءُوۡسِكُمۡ وَاَرۡجُلَكُمۡ اِلَى الۡكَعۡبَيۡنِ ؕ وَاِنۡ كُنۡتُمۡ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوۡا ؕ وَاِنۡ كُنۡتُمۡ مَّرۡضٰۤى اَوۡ عَلٰى سَفَرٍ اَوۡ جَآءَ اَحَدٌ مِّنۡكُمۡ مِّنَ الۡغَآئِطِ اَوۡ لٰمَسۡتُمُ النِّسَآءَ فَلَمۡ تَجِدُوۡا مَآءً فَتَيَمَّمُوۡا صَعِيۡدًا طَيِّبًا فَامۡسَحُوۡا بِوُجُوۡهِكُمۡ وَاَيۡدِيۡكُمۡ مِّنۡهُ ؕ مَا يُرِيۡدُ اللّٰهُ لِيَجۡعَلَ عَلَيۡكُمۡ مِّنۡ حَرَجٍ وَّلٰكِنۡ يُّرِيۡدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمۡ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعۡمَتَهٗ عَلَيۡكُمۡ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَشۡكُرُوۡنَ ۝٦

(5-6) Believers! When you stand up for Prayer wash your faces and your hands up to the elbows, and wipe your heads, and wash your feet up to the ankles. (24) And if you are in the state of ritual impurity, purify yourselves (by taking a bath). (25) But if you are either ill, travelling, have satisfied a want of nature or have had contact with women and find no water then have recourse to clean earth and wipe your faces and your hands therewith. (26) Allah does not want to lay any hardship upon you; rather He wants to purify you and complete His favors upon you (27) so that you may give thanks.

(24) The explanation of this injunction by the Prophet (peace be on him) indicates that washing of the face includes rinsing one's mouth and inhaling water into the nostrils. Unless this is done the washing of the face is not considered complete. Likewise, since the ears are part of the head, 'wiping the head' includes wiping one's hands over the external and internal parts of the ears as well. Moreover, before starting to wash the other parts one should first wash one's hands so that the instruments of washing are themselves clean.

(25) Janabah (the state of major ritual impurity) - whether caused by the sexual act or merely by seminal discharge - renders it unlawful to perform the ritual Prayer and to touch the Qur'an for further details see (Surah 4, nn. 67-9)above.

(26) For explanation see (Surah 4, nn. 69-70)above.

(27) Just as purity of the soul is a blessing, so is cleanliness of the body. God's favor to man can be completed only when he has received comprehensive direction in respect of both spiritual purity and physical cleanliness.

وَاذۡكُرُوۡا نِعۡمَةَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيۡكُمۡ وَمِيۡثَاقَهُ الَّذِىۡ وَاثَقَكُمۡ بِهٖۤ اِذۡ قُلۡتُمۡ سَمِعۡنَا وَاَطَعۡنَا‌ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ‌ؕ
اِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيۡمٌۢ بِذَاتِ الصُّدُوۡرِ ۝٧

(5-7) Remember Allah's favor upon you (28) and His covenant which He made with you when you said: 'We have heard and we obey.' So do fear Allah. Allah has full knowledge even of that which is hidden in the breasts of people.

(28) The 'favor' mentioned here denotes illuminating the Straight Way, and entrusting to the believers the task of guidance and leadership of the whole world.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا كُوۡنُوۡا قَوّٰمِيۡنَ لِلّٰهِ شُهَدَآءَ بِالۡقِسۡطِ‌ وَلَا يَجۡرِمَنَّكُمۡ شَنَاٰنُ قَوۡمٍ عَلٰٓى اَلَّا تَعۡدِلُوۡا‌ ؕ اِعۡدِلُوۡا هُوَ اَقۡرَبُ لِلتَّقۡوٰى وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ‌ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيۡرٌ بِمَا تَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ۝٨

(5-8) Believers! Be upright bearers of witness for Allah, (29) and do not let the enmity of any people move you to deviate from justice. Act justly, that is nearer to God-fearing. And fear Allah. Surely Allah is well aware of what you do.

(29) See (Surah 4, nn. 164-5)above.

وَعَدَ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ لَهُمۡ مَّغۡفِرَةٌ وَّاَجۡرٌ عَظِيۡمٌ ۝٩

(5-9) Allah has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds forgiveness from sins and a great reward.

وَالَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡا وَكَذَّبُوۡا بِاٰيٰتِنَاۤ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصۡحٰبُ الۡجَحِيۡمِ ۝١٠

(5-10) As for those who disbelieve and give the lie to Our signs, they are destined for the Blazing Flame.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوا اذۡكُرُوۡا نِعۡمَتَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيۡكُمۡ اِذۡ هَمَّ قَوۡمٌ اَنۡ يَّبۡسُطُوۡۤا اِلَيۡكُمۡ اَيۡدِيَهُمۡ فَكَفَّ اَيۡدِيَهُمۡ عَنۡكُمۡ‌ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ‌ ؕ وَعَلَى اللّٰهِ فَلۡيَتَوَكَّلِ الۡمُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ۝١١

(5-11) Believers! Remember Allah's favor upon you. When a certain people decided to stretch their hands against you, He restrained their hands from you. (30) Do fear Allah. Men of faith should put their trust in Allah alone.

(30) This alludes to the incident reported by Ibn 'Abbas when a group of Jews invited the Prophet (peace be on him) and a number of his close Companions to dinner. They had in fact hatched a plot to pounce upon the guests and thus undermine the very foundation of Islam. But by the grace of God the Prophet (peace be on him) came to know of the plot at the eleventh hour and did not go. Since the following section is addressed to the Children of Israel, this incident is alluded to here in order to mark the transition to a new subject.

The discourse which begins here has two purposes. The first is to warn the Muslims against following the ways of their predecessors, the People of the Book. The Muslims are told, therefore, that the Israelites and the followers of Jesus had made a covenant with God in the past, in the manner that the Muslims had recently done so. The Muslims should, therefore, take heed lest they also break their covenant and fall a prey to error and misguidance as their predecessors had done.

The second is to sensitize the Jews and Christians to the errors they have committed and invite them to the true religion.

وَ لَقَدۡ اَخَذَ اللّٰہُ مِیۡثَاقَ بَنِیۡۤ اِسۡرَآءِیۡلَ ۚ وَ بَعَثۡنَا مِنۡہُمُ اثۡنَیۡ عَشَرَ نَقِیۡبًا ؕ وَ قَالَ اللّٰہُ اِنِّیۡ
مَعَکُمۡ ؕ لَئِنۡ اَقَمۡتُمُ الصَّلٰوۃَ وَ اٰتَیۡتُمُ الزَّکٰوۃَ وَ اٰمَنۡتُمۡ بِرُسُلِیۡ وَ عَزَّرۡتُمُوۡہُمۡ وَ اَقۡرَضۡتُمُ اللّٰہَ
قَرۡضًا حَسَنًا لَّاُکَفِّرَنَّ عَنۡکُمۡ سَیِّاٰتِکُمۡ وَ لَاُدۡخِلَنَّکُمۡ جَنّٰتٍ تَجۡرِیۡ مِنۡ تَحۡتِہَا الۡاَنۡہٰرُ ۚ فَمَنۡ کَفَرَ
بَعۡدَ ذٰلِکَ مِنۡکُمۡ فَقَدۡ ضَلَّ سَوَآءَ السَّبِیۡلِ ﴿۱۲﴾

(5-12) Surely Allah took a covenant with the Children of Israel, and We raised up from them twelve of their leaders, (31) and Allah said: 'Behold, I am with you; if you establish Prayer and pay Zakah and believe in My Prophets and help them, (32) and lend Allah a good loan, (33) I will certainly efface from you your evil deeds, (34) and will surely cause you to enter the Gardens beneath which rivers flow. Whosoever of you disbelieves thereafter has indeed gone astray from the right way. (35)

(31) The word naqib in Arabic denotes supervisor and censor. There were twelve tribes among the Israelites and each tribe was required to appoint one of its members as a naqib, to look after their affairs and try to prevent them from becoming victims of irreligiousness and moral corruption. Although the Book of Numbers in the Bible does mention these twelve men, it does not seem to convey the sense of their being religious and moral mentors, as the term naqib employed by the Qur'an does. The Bible simply mentions them as the chiefs and dignitaries of their tribes.

(32) The assurance of God's support is made conditional upon their continuous response to the call of God and for support of His Prophets.

(33) This expression signifies spending one's wealth for the sake of God. Since God has promised to return to man every penny that he spends in His way along with His reward, which will be several-fold, the Qur'an characterizes this spending as a loan to God. This spending is considered a loan provided it is a 'good loan', that is, provided the money spent in the cause of God has been acquired by legitimate means and has been spent in accordance with the laws of God and with sincerity and earnestness.

(34) To efface someone's evil deeds signifies two things. First, that if a man decides to follow the Straight Path and strives to follow God's directives in both thought and action his soul will be purged of many evils and his way of life will gradually become free of corruption. Second, if, in spite of this reform, weaknesses still persist in a man's life he is assured that God will not punish him and will have his failing erased from his record. For God is not too exacting over trivial errors, providing a man has sincerely accepted the basic guidance and reformed his character.

(35) That is, they once found the 'right way' and then allowed it to be lost and thus put themselves on the road to perdition. We have translated the Qur'anic expression 'sawa' al-sabil' as the 'right way' for the sake of brevity. A better rendering could be, 'the highroad of balance and moderation', but even this would fail to bring out the meaning fully.

In order to grasp the full significance of what is being said here one should bear in mind that in himself man constitutes a microcosm of society. He has innumerable powers and potentialities, myriad desires, feelings and inclinations, and a host of divergent urges. Social life consists of a huge network of complex relationships, and with the growth of civilization and culture the complexity of these relationships increases. There is also a rich fund of resources in the world and there are countless

possibilities for their utilization; as a result, man is confronted with a plethora of choices and problems.

The fact that man has inherent limitations means that he is incapable of viewing in one sweep and in a balanced way the entire span of existence. Hence, man is in no position to prescribe for his kind a judicious way of life - a way of life wherein justice is done to all his powers and capacities; in which a wholesome balance is maintained between all his inherent potentialities; in which all his urges are given their due; in which his two-fold need for inner satisfaction and external self-realization is fully met; in which various aspects of human life are taken into proper consideration, giving birth to an integrated scheme with a built-in capacity to harmonize the multifarious strains and stresses of social life; in which material resources are fully exploited in the best interests of both the individual and society and within the framework of equity, justice and righteousness. When man takes upon himself the task of prescribing the guidelines for his life and becomes his own law-maker, his mind tends to become preoccupied with one specific aspect of human life, with one of the numerous demands of his nature, with one of the myriad problems calling for solution. His mental involvement is liable to be so intense that he adopts - consciously or otherwise - an unjust attitude towards all the other aspects, requirements and problems of human life. Consequently, when such opinions are imposed, the balance which ought to prevail in man's life is disrupted and he begins to swing either towards one extreme or the other. Gradually, this deviation assumes intolerable proportions. A reaction sets in, and justice is demanded for the neglected aspects of human life. Still, human life remains deprived of justice. The reason for this failure is that man's reaction to imbalance is itself devoid of balance. The new dispensation in turn persists in excessive preoccupation with either one specific aspect, problem or requirement of human life at the expense of all the others. Thus human life is denied judicious and balanced progress. Man continues to stumble hither and thither; from one form of self-destruction to another. All courses of life charted by man himself are winding and crooked. They move in the wrong direction, reach the wrong end and then

turn back in another wrong direction.

Among these numerous ways - all false - there is just one way that lies exactly in the middle. This way alone does full justice to all of man's various potentialities and urges, to all his instincts and predispositions, to all the multifarious claims of both the body and the spirit; in short, to all aspects of his life. In this way there is no crookedness; it is the one course of life in which nothing is given either too much consideration or too little, and nothing suffers inequity and injustice. Man's very nature thirsts for such a way, and the succession of revolts against false ways of life is merely a manifestation of his constant quest for this right and straight way. Left to himself, man is incapable of charting this way. It is God alone Who can direct him to it; and indeed the Prophets were sent for this very purpose.

The Qur'an designates this way as sawa al-sabil ('the right way') in the present verse and elsewhere as al-sirat al-mustaqim ('the straightway'). (See Towards Understanding the Qur'an, vol. I, (Surah 1, verse 5, and n. 8.) This is the road which goes amidst the countless winding and crooked paths of life; the road which leads man, disregarding all the curved and crooked paths, straight on to his success, right from this world to the Hereafter. Whoever goes along it enjoys rectitude in this world and success and felicity in the Next, but whoever loses this road is bound to become a victim of false beliefs and false ways of conduct and thus comes to have a wrong orientation in life. This will lead him to Hell, where all bent and crooked paths end. The following illustrates man's dilemma.

In modern times some philosophers have been so impressed by this constant swinging in human life, from one extreme to another, as to have mistakenly argued that the dialectical process is the natural course of human life. They conclude, therefore, that the only way for human life to progress is that a thesis should first swing it in one direction, and then an antithesis swing it in the opposite direction, after which there will emerge a synthesis which constitutes the course of human progress. These curved lines from one extreme to the other do not indicate the correct course of human progress. Rather they

represent the tragic stumbling which again and again obstruct the true progress of human life. Every extreme thesis sets life on a certain course and continues to pull it in that direction for some time. When human life is thus thrown off its 'right course' the result is that certain realities of life - which had not received their due - rise up in revolt, and this revolt often assumes the form of an antithesis. This revolt begins to pull life in the opposite direction. As the 'right way' is approached the conflicting ideas - the thesis and antithesis - begin to effect some kind of mutual compromise, leading to the emergence of a synthesis. This synthesis comprises many elements conducive to the good of mankind. But since societies which do not submit to the guidance of the Prophets are deprived both of the signposts that might indicate the 'right way' and of faith to help steady man's feet thereon this synthesis does not permit human life to maintain the golden mean. Its momentum is so powerful that it once more pushes life to the opposite extreme. At this point, certain realities are once again denied their due, with the result that another antithesis emerges in reaction to the iniquities of the earlier ideology. Had the light of the Qur'an been available to these short-sighted philosophers, and had they been able to perceive the 'right way' envisaged by the Qur'an, they would have realized that this was the true course of human progress.

فَبِمَا نَ ِقضِهِم مِّ ٖيثَاقَهُم لَعَنّٰهُم وَ جَعَ لنَا قُلُ ٗوبَهُم قٰسِيَ ًةيُحَرِّفُ ونَ الۡ كَلِمَ عَ ٖن مَّوَاضِعِهٖ وَ نَسُوا حَظًّا مِّمَّا ذُكِّرُ وۡا بِ ٖهوَ لَا تَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلٰى خَآئِنَ ٍةمِّنۡهُم اِلَّا قَلِيۡلًا مِّنۡهُم فَاعۡفُ عَنۡهُم وَاصۡ فَحۡ اِنَّ اللّٰ هَ يُحِبُّ الۡ مُحۡسِنِيۡنَ ١٣

(5-13) Then, for their breach of the covenant We cast them away from Our mercy and caused their hearts to harden. (And now they are in such a state that) they pervert the words from their context and thus distort their meaning, and have forgotten a good portion of the teaching they were imparted, and regarding all except a few of them you continue to learn that they committed acts of treachery. Pardon them, then, and overlook their deeds. Surely Allah loves those who do good deeds.

وَ مِنَ الَّذِيۡنَ قَالُوۡۤا اِنَّا نَصٰرٰۤى اَخَذۡنَا مِيۡثَاقَهُمۡ فَنَسُوۡا حَظًّا مِّمَّا ذُكِّرُوۡا بِهٖ فَاَغۡرَيۡنَا بَيۡنَهُمُ الۡعَدَاوَةَ وَ الۡبَغۡضَآءَ اِلٰى يَوۡمِ الۡقِيٰمَةِ ؕ وَ سَوۡفَ يُنَبِّئُهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِمَا كَانُوۡا يَصۡنَعُوۡنَ ١٤

(5-14) We also took a covenant from those who said: 'We are Christians'; [36] but they forgot a good portion of the teaching they had been imparted with. Wherefore We aroused enmity and spite between them till the Day of Resurrection, and ultimately Allah will tell them what they had contrived.

(36) Some are of the opinion that the word Nasara (meaning Christians) is derived from Nasirah (Nazareth), the birth-place of the Messiah. In fact this word is not derived from Nasirah (Nazareth) but from the word nusrah, and the basis of this derivation is the question posed by the Messiah to his disciples: 'Who are my supporters (ansari) in the way of God?' In response to this they had said: 'We are the supporters (ansar) (in the way) of God.' Christian authors have been misled by the resemblance between the words Nasirah and Nasara into believing that the name of the sect founded in the early history of Christianity, and contemptuously characterized as either Nazarenes or Ebonites served as the basis of the Qur'anic designation of the Christians. But here the Qur'ijo categorically states that they had declared that they were 'Nasara' and it is obvious that the Christians never called themselves 'Nazarenes'.

In this connection it should be recalled that Jesus never called his followers 'Christians' for he had not come to found a new religion named after him. His mission was to revive the religion of Moses and of all the Prophets who preceded him as well as of the one who was to appear after him. Hence, he neither formed any cult divorced from the Israelites and the followers of the Mosaic Law nor designated his followers by any distinctive name. Likewise, his early followers neither considered themselves to be separate from the Israelite community nor developed into an independent group nor adopted any distinctive symbol and name. They worshipped in the temple of Jerusalem along with other Jews and considered themselves to be followers of the Mosaic Law (see Acts 3:1-10; 21: 14-15,21). Later on the process of alienation began to operate on both sides. On the one hand, Paul, one of the followers of Jesus, declared independence from the Mosaic Law holding that faith in Christ was all that one needed for

salvation. On the other hand, the Jewish rabbis declared the followers of Christ to be heretics and excommunicated them. Despite this, for some time the new sect had no distinct appellation of its own. The followers of Christ variously described themselves as 'disciples', as 'brethren', as 'those who believed', and as 'saints' (see Acts 2: 44; 4: 32; 9: 26; 11: 29; 13: 52; 15- 1; 23: 1 and Romans 15- 25 and Colossians 1: 2). The Jews sometimes designated them as 'Galileans' and as 'the sect of Nazarenes' (see Acts 24: 5; Luke 13: 2). These nicknames, which were originally contrived in, order to ridicule them, referred to Nazareth, the home town of Jesus in the district of Galilee. These names, however, did not gain sufficient popularity to become the permanent names of the followers of Christ. They were called 'Christians' for the first time by the people of Antioch in 43 A.D. or 44 A.D. when Paul and Barnabas went there and began to preach their religion (Acts 11: 26). This appellation was flung at them by the opponents of the followers of Christ precisely in order to tease them by using an appellation which was unacceptable to them. But when their enemies began to call them consistently by this name their leaders reacted by saying that if they were called Christians because of their allegiance to Christ they had no reason to be ashamed of it (1 Peter 4: 16). It was thus that the followers of Christ also gradually began to call themselves by the same name which had originally been conferred upon them sarcastically. In the course of time the Christians ceased to realize that theirs had originally been a derogatory appellation chosen for them by outsiders rather than by themselves.

The Qur'an, therefore, does not refer to the followers of Christ as Christians. It reminds them rather that they belong to those who responded to the query of Jesus: 'Who are my supporters (ansari) in the way of God?' by saying that they were his ansar (supporters) in God's cause. See (Surah al-Saff 61: 14 - Ed.) It is an irony of fate that far from feeling grateful at being referred to by a dignified appellation Christian missionaries take offence at the fact that the Qur'an designates them as Nasara rather than as 'Christians'.

يٰٓاَ لَ لِ كِتٰبِ قَ جَآءَكُمۡ رَسُوۡلُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمۡ كَثِيۡرًا مِّمَّا كُ مُ خۡ فُ وۡ نَ مِنَ لۡ كِتٰبِ وَ يَعۡ فُوۡا
غَ كَثِيۡرٍ ؕ قَ جَآءَكُمۡ مِّنَ اللّٰ ۡ رٌ وَّ كِتٰبٌ مُّبِيۡنٌ ۙ﴿۱۵﴾

(5-15) People of the Book! Now Our Messenger has come to you: he makes clear to you a good many things of the Book which you were wont to conceal, and also passes over many things. (37) There has now come to you a light from Allah, and a clear Book.

(37) God discloses some of the dishonest and treacherous dealings of theirs where He deems it necessary in order to strengthen the cause of the true religion, and ignores the disclosure of those which are not truly indispensable.

يَّ ۙ بِهِ اللّٰ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضۡوَانَهٗ سُبُلَ السَّلٰمِ وَ يُخۡ رِجُ مِّنَ الظُّلُمٰتِ اِلَى النُّ رِ بِاِذۡ وَ
يَهۡدِ ۦ اِلٰى صِرَاطٍ مُّسۡتَقِيۡمٍ ۚ﴿۱۶﴾

(5-16) through which Allah shows to all who seek to please Him the paths leading to safety. (38) He brings them out, by His leave, from darkness to light and directs them on to the straight way.

(38) The word 'safety' here denotes safety from false perception and outlook, safety from misdeeds and their consequences. Whoever seeks guidance from the Book of God and from the example of the Messenger (peace be on him) can find out how to keep himself safe from errors at each of life's crossroads.

لَقَدۡ كَفَرَ الَّذِيۡنَ قَالُوۡۤا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الۡمَسِيۡحُ ابۡنُ مَرۡيَمَ ؕ قُلۡ فَمَنۡ يَّمۡلِكُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيۡـًٔا
اِنۡ اَرَادَ اَنۡ يُّهۡلِكَ الۡمَسِيۡحَ ابۡنَ مَرۡيَمَ وَ اُمَّهٗ وَمَنۡ فِى الۡاَرۡضِ جَمِيۡعًا ؕ وَ لِلّٰهِ مُلۡكُ
السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ وَ مَا بَيۡنَهُمَا ؕ يَخۡلُقُ مَا يَشَآءُ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىۡءٍ قَدِيۡرٌ ؕ﴿۱۷﴾

(5-17) Indeed those who said: 'Christ, the son of Mary, he is indeed God', disbelieved. (39) Say (O Muhammad!): 'Who could have overruled Allah had He so willed to destroy Christ, the son of Mary, and his mother, and all those who are on earth?' For to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all

that is between them; He creates what He wills. (40) Allah is All-Powerful.

(39) The original mistake committed by the Christians in declaring Jesus to be a combination of human and divine essences turned Jesus into a mystery for them, and the more the Christian scholars tried to solve this mystery by resorting to conjecture and rhetorical extravagance the more involved the whole matter became. Those who were more impressed by the humanity of Jesus stressed his being the son of God and considered him to be one of the three gods. Those who were more impressed by the divinity of Jesus considered him to be none other than God, stressing that he was the human incarnation of God, and worshipped him as God. Those who tried to strike a middle path spent all their efforts hammering out subtle verbal formulations of the Trinity that would allow people to consider the Messiah to be God and man at one and the same time, to affirm that God and the Messiah are independent and simultaneously constitute an inseparable whole see (Surah 4, nn. 212, 213, 215) above.

(40) This statement hints at the childishness of those who have been misled into believing that the Messiah himself is God either because of his miraculous birth or because of his flawless moral character or because of the miracles which he performed. The Messiah is merely a sign of the innumerable wonders of God's creation; a sign which somehow dazzled the eyes of those superficial people. Had their perception been wider they would have been able to see that there are even more inspiring examples of His creation and infinite power. If anything their attitude was indicative of the intellectual puerility of those who were so overawed by the excellence of a creature as to mistake him for the Creator. Those whose intelligence penetrates through the excellence of creatures, who look upon them merely as signs of the magnificent power of God, and who are led by such observations to a reinforcement of faith in the Creator are truly wise.

وَ قَالَتِ الْيَهُوْدُ وَ النَّصٰرٰى نَحْنُ اَبْنٰٓؤُا اللّٰهِ وَ اَحِبَّآؤُهٗ ؕ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ بِذُنُوْبِكُمْ ؕ بَلْ اَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ ؕ يَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَّشَآءُ وَ يُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَ لِلّٰهِ مُلْكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ وَ مَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۫ وَ اِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيْرُ ۱۸

(5-18) The Jews and the Christians say: 'We are Allah's children and His beloved ones.' Ask them: 'Why, then, does He chastise you for your sins?' You are the same as other men He has created. He forgives whom He wills and chastises whom He wills. And to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them. To Him is the eventual return.

يٰٓاَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ قَدْ جَآءَكُمْ رَسُوْلُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ عَلٰى فَتْرَةٍ مِّنَ الرُّسُلِ اَنْ تَقُوْلُوْا مَا جَآءَنَا مِنْ بَشِيْرٍ وَّ لَا نَذِيْرٍ ۫ فَقَدْ جَآءَكُمْ بَشِيْرٌ وَّ نَذِيْرٌ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ ۱۹

(5-19) People of the Book! After a long interlude during which no Messengers have appeared there has come to you Our Messenger to elucidate the teaching of the true faith lest you say: 'No bearer of glad tidings and no warner has come to us.' For now there indeed has come to you a bearer of glad tidings and a warner, Allah is All-Powerful. (41)

(41) In the present context this sentence is extremely eloquent and subtle. It signifies that the same God who had sent warners and bearers of glad tidings to men in the past has now sent Muhammad (peace be on him) with the same task. At the same time it also means that they {should not treat the message of this warner and bearer of glad tidings lightly. They should bear in mind that if they disregard the injunctions of God, He can chastise them as He wills, for He is All-Powerful and All-Mighty.

وَ اِذْ قَالَ مُوْسٰى لِقَوْمِهٖ يٰقَوْمِ اذْكُرُوْا نِعْمَةَ اللّٰهِ عَلَيْكُمْ اِذْ جَعَلَ فِيْكُمْ اَنْۢبِيَآءَ وَ جَعَلَكُمْ مُّلُوْكًا ۖ وَّ اٰتٰىكُمْ مَّا لَمْ يُؤْتِ اَحَدًا مِّنَ الْعٰلَمِيْنَ ۲۰

(5-20) Remember when Moses said to his people: 'My people, remember Allah's favor upon you when He raised Prophets amongst you and appointed you rulers, and granted to you what He had not granted to anyone else in the world. (42)

(42) This refers to the glory the Israelites enjoyed before the time of Moses. There had appeared among them such great Prophets as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Moreover, from the time of Joseph they were able to achieve very considerable power and authority in Egypt. For a considerable period they were the greatest rulers of the civilized world, reigning supreme in Egypt and the surrounding territories. People are generally inclined to regard the time of Moses as the starting point for the rise of the Israelites. The Qur'an, however, states categorically that the truly glorious period of their history had passed long before Moses, and that Moses himself drew the attention of his people to that period as their time of glory.

يٰقَوۡمِ ادۡخُلُوا الۡاَرۡضَ الۡمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِىۡ كَتَبَ اللّٰهُ لَـكُمۡ وَلَا تَرۡتَدُّوۡا عَلٰٓى اَدۡبَارِكُمۡ فَتَنۡقَلِبُوۡا خٰسِرِيۡنَ ﴿۲۱﴾

(5-21) My people! Enter the holy land which Allah has ordained for you; (43) and do not turn back for then you will turn about losers. (44)

(43) This signifies Palestine which had been the homeland of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. After their exodus from Egypt, God ordered the Israelites to go forth to Egypt and conquer it.

(44) This statement of Moses refers to the second year after they had come out of Egypt when he and his people lived in tents in the wilderness of Paran. This desert lies in the Sinai peninsula adjacent to the northern borders of Arabia and the southern borders of Palestine.

قَالُوۡا يٰمُوۡسٰٓى اِنَّ فِيۡهَا قَوۡمًا جَبَّارِيۡنَ ۖ وَاِنَّا لَنۡ نَّدۡخُلَهَا حَتّٰى يَخۡرُجُوۡا مِنۡهَا فَاِنۡ يَّخۡرُجُوۡا مِنۡهَا فَاِنَّا دٰخِلُوۡنَ ﴿۲۲﴾

(5-22) They answered: 'Moses, therein live a ferocious people: we will not enter unless they depart from it; but if they do depart from it then we will surely enter it.'

قَالَ رَجُلٰنِ مِنَ الَّذِيۡنَ يَخَافُوۡنَ اَنۡعَمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيۡهِمَا ادۡخُلُوۡا عَلَيۡهِمُ الۡبَابَ فَاِذَا دَخَلۡتُمُوۡهُ فَاِنَّكُمۡ غٰلِبُوۡنَ ۚ وَعَلَى اللّٰهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوۡۤا اِنۡ كُنۡتُمۡ مُّؤۡمِنِيۡنَ ﴿۲۳﴾

(5-23) Two from among these who were frightened but upon whom Allah had bestowed His favor [45] said: 'Enter upon them through the gate - for if you do enter - you will be the victors. And put your trust in Allah if indeed you are men of faith.'

(45) This could have two meanings: either that two of those who feared the high-handed people of the Promised Land made that statement or that two of those who feared God did so. (However, most Qur'anic commentators subscribe to the latter meaning - Ed.)

قَالُوۡا یٰمُوۡسٰۤی اِنَّا لَنۡ نَّدۡخُلَہَاۤ اَبَدًا مَّا دَامُوۡا فِیۡہَا فَاذۡہَبۡ اَنۡتَ وَ رَبُّکَ فَقَاتِلَاۤ اِنَّا ہٰہُنَا قٰعِدُوۡنَ ﴿۲۴﴾

(5-24) Nevertheless they said: 'O Moses! Never shall we enter it as long as they are there. Go forth, then, you and your Lord, and fight, both of you. As for us, we will sit here.'

قَالَ رَبِّ اِنِّیۡ لَاۤ اَمۡلِکُ اِلَّا نَفۡسِیۡ وَ اَخِیۡ فَافۡرُقۡ بَیۡنَنَا وَ بَیۡنَ الۡقَوۡمِ الۡفٰسِقِیۡنَ ﴿۲۵﴾

(5-25) Thereupon Moses said: 'My Lord! I have control over none but my own self and my brother; so distinguish between us and the transgressing people.'

قَالَ فَاِنَّهَا مُحَرَّمَةٌ عَلَيۡهِمۡ اَرۡبَعِيۡنَ سَنَةً يَتِيۡهُوۡنَ فِى الۡاَرۡضِ ؕ فَلَا تَاۡسَ عَلَى الۡقَوۡمِ الۡفٰسِقِيۡنَ‌ۚ ﴿۲۶﴾

(5-26) Allah said: 'This land will now be forbidden to them for forty years and they will remain wandering about on the earth. (46) Do not grieve over the condition of these transgressing people. (47)

(46) The details of this incident are found in the Bible in Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua. The essence of the story is that Moses sent twelve heads of Israel to spy out Palestine. They returned after forty days and said: 'We came to the land to which you sent us; it flows with milk and honey. Yet the people who dwell in the land are strong, and the cities are fortified and very large; and besides, we saw the descendants of Anak there . . . and all the people that we saw in it are men of great stature. And there we saw the Nephilim (the sons of Anak, who come from the Nephilim); and we seemed to ourselves like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them.' Then all the congregation cried out: 'Would that we had died in the land of Egypt; or would that we had died in this wilderness; why does the Lord bring us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey; would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?' At this they were censured for cowardice by two of the twelve heads who had spied out Palestine, Joshua and Caleb. Caleb suggested that they should go and seize Palestine. Then both of them said: 'If the Lord delights in us, He will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land which flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the Lord; and do not fear the people of the land ... for the Lord is with us; do not fear them' (Numbers 14: 1-9). But the congregation responded to this by crying out that both ought to be stoned. This so provoked the wrath of God that He commanded that their bodies would fall dead in the wilderness and that of all their numbers numbered from twenty years old and upward, who had murmured against Him, none would come into the promised land except Caleb and Joshua; that only after an entire generation had passed away and a new generation had sprung up would they be enabled to conquer Palestine. Because of this divine decree, it took the people of Israel thirty-eight years to reach Transjordan from Paran. During this period all those who had left Egypt in their

youth had perished. After the conquest of Transjordan Moses died (Ibid., 14: 10 ff.).

WANDERINGS OF THE ISRAELITES IN THE SINAI PENINSULA

The Prophet Moses (peace be on him) led the Israelites out of Egypt and brought them to Mount Sinai by way of Marah, Elim and Rephaim in the Sinai Peninsula. Here he stayed for a little over a year and received most of the Commandments of the Torah. Then he was commanded to lead the Israelites towards Palestine and conquer it, for that land was to be given to them as an inheritance. So, he led them through Taberah and Nazareth and came to the desert of Paran from where he dispatched a deputation of prominent Israelites to spy out Palestine. The deputation returned after forty days and made their report at Kadesh. Except for the encouraging picture presented by Joshua and Caleb, the report made by the other members was so disappointing that the Israelites cried out in disgust and refused to march on to Palestine. Thereupon God decreed that they would wander for forty years in the wilderness and none of their older generation except Joshua and Caleb would see Palestine. Thus, the Israelites wandered homeless in the wilderness of Paran, Shur and Zin, fighting and struggling against the Amalekites, the Amorites, the Edomites, the Midianites and the Moabites. When the forty years was about to end, the Prophet Aaron (peace be on him) died in Mount Hor, near the border of Edom. At about this time the Prophet Moses (peace be on him) entered Moab at the head of the Israelites, conquered the whole area and reached Heshbon and Shittim. After him Joshua, his first successor, crossed the River Jordan from the east and captured Jericho, the first Palestinian city to fall to the Israelites. Later on the whole of Palestine was conquered by them within a short period.

Ailah (present-day Aqaba) on this map is the place where probably the well-known incident of the Sabbath-breakers, as mentioned in (Surah al-Baqarah 2: 65) and (Surah al-Araf 7: 166), took place.

Later on during the caliphate (sic) of Joshua the Israelites became capable of conquering Palestine.

In view of the fact that the followers of all the Prophets are Muslims, the author has used a peculiarly Islamic term - caliphate, rather than kingship, etc. - to signify the predominantly religious (or shall we say, Islamic) quality of his rule and to distinguish it from systems of government not animated by the religious spirit - Ed.

(47) The purpose of referring to this event becomes clear if we reflect upon the context. It seems to be to bring home to the Israelites that the punishment to which they would be subjected if they adopted a rebellious attitude towards Muhammad (peace be on him) would be even more severe than the .one to which they had been subjected in the time of Moses.

وَ اتۡلُ عَلَيۡهِمۡ نَبَاَ ابۡنَىۡۡ اٰدَمَ بِالۡحَقِّ ۘ اِذۡ قَرَّبَا قُرۡبَانًا فَتُقُبِّلَ مِنۡ اَحَدِهِمَا وَلَمۡ يُتَقَبَّلۡ مِنَ الۡاٰخَرِ ؕ قَالَ لَاَقۡتُلَنَّكَ ؕ قَالَ اِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللّٰهُ مِنَ الۡمُتَّقِيۡنَ ﴿۲۷﴾

(5-27) Narrate to them in all truth the story of the two sons of Adam. When they made an offering and it was accepted from one of them and was not accepted from the other, the latter said: 'I will surely kill you.' Thereupon the former said: 'Allah accepts offerings only from the God-fearing. (48)

(48) God's refusal to accept the sacrifice of one of the two brothers was not due to any wrong the other brother might have committed but to his own lack of piety. Hence, rather than attempt to kill his brother he should be concerned with cultivating piety.

لَئِنۡۡ بَسَطۡتَّ اِلَىَّ يَدَكَ لِتَقۡتُلَنِىۡ مَاۤ اَنَا بِبَاسِطٍ يَّدِىَ اِلَيۡكَ لِاَقۡتُلَكَ ۚ اِنِّىۡۡ اَخَافُ اللّٰهَ رَبَّ الۡعٰلَمِيۡنَ ﴿۲۸﴾

(5-28) Even if you stretch forth your hand against me to kill, I will not stretch forth my hand to kill you. (49) Surely, I fear Allah, the Lord of the entire universe.

(49) This does not mean, that his brother assured him that when the latter stepped forward to kill him he would keep his

hands tied and stretch out his own neck to be cut down rather than defend himself. What this statement amounts to is an assurance on the part of the first brother that, even though the other was intent on killing him, he himself had no such intention. In other words, he assured his brother that even though the latter was busy planning his murder he would not take the initiative in killing him despite his knowledge of the latter's intent.

Righteousness does not demand at all that when a man is subjected to wrongful aggression he should surrender to the aggressor rather than defend himself. Righteousness, however, demands that a man should not take the initiative and try to kill someone even though he knows him to be bent on killing him. He should rather wait for the act of aggression to be initiated by the other person. And this is exactly what was intended by the statement of the righteous son of Adam.

اِنِّیۡۤ اُرِیۡدُ اَنۡ تَبُوۡٓاَ بِاِثۡمِیۡ وَ اِثۡمِکَ فَتَکُوۡنَ مِنۡ اَصۡحٰبِ النَّارِ ؕ وَ ذٰلِکَ جَزٰٓؤُا الظّٰلِمِیۡنَ ﴿۲۹﴾

(5-29) I would desire that you be laden with my sin and with your sin, (50) and thus become among the inmates of the Fire. That indeed is the right recompense of the wrong-doers.'

(50) The righteous son of Adam told his brother that rather than both of them becoming sinners by trying to kill each other, he would prefer to see the entire sin fall on the lot of the one who was intent on the murder - the sin of the aggressor's attempt to murder, as well as the sin of any injury that might be inflicted on him in self-defense.

فَطَوَّعَتۡ لَہٗ نَفۡسُہٗ قَتۡلَ اَخِیۡہِ فَقَتَلَہٗ فَاَصۡبَحَ مِنَ الۡخٰسِرِیۡنَ ﴿۳۰﴾

(5-30) At last his evil soul drove him to the murder of his brother, and he killed him, whereby he himself became one of the losers.

فَبَعَثَ اللّٰہُ غُرَابًا یَّبۡحَثُ فِی الۡاَرۡضِ لِیُرِیَہٗ کَیۡفَ یُوَارِیۡ سَوۡءَۃَ اَخِیۡہِ ؕ قَالَ یٰوَیۡلَتٰۤی اَعَجَزۡتُ اَنۡ اَکُوۡنَ مِثۡلَ ہٰذَا الۡغُرَابِ فَاُوَارِیَ سَوۡءَۃَ اَخِیۡ ؕ فَاَصۡبَحَ مِنَ النّٰدِمِیۡنَ ﴿۳۱﴾

(5-31) Thereupon Allah sent forth a raven who began to scratch the earth to show him how he might cover the corpse of his brother. So seeing he cried: 'Woe unto me! Was I unable even to be like this raven and find a way to cover the corpse of my brother? (51) Then he became full of remorse at his doing. (52)

(51) In this way God made this errant son of Adam realize his ignorance and folly. Once his attention turned to self-appraisal, his regret was not confined to realizing that in his effort to hide his brother's corpse he proved to be even less efficient than the raven. He also began to feel how foolish he was to have killed his own brother. The latter part of the sentence indicates this remorse.

(52) The purpose of mentioning this particular incident is to reproach the Jews subtly for the plot they had hatched to

assassinate the Prophet (peace be on him) and some of his illustrious Companions see (n. 30) above. The resemblance between the two incidents is evident. God honored some of the illiterate people of Arabia and disregarded the ancient People of the Book because the former were pious while the latter were not. But rather than reflect upon the causes of their rejection by God, and do something to overcome the failings which had led to that rejection, the Israelites were seized by the same fit of arrogant ignorance and folly which had once seized the criminal son of Adam, and resolved to kill those whose good deeds had been accepted by God. It was obvious that such acts would contribute nothing towards their acceptance by God. They would rather earn them an even greater degree of God's disapproval.

مِنۡ اَجۡلِ ذٰلِكَ ۚ كَتَبۡنَا عَلٰى بَنِىۡۤ اِسۡرَآءِيۡلَ اَنَّهٗ مَنۡ قَتَلَ نَفۡسًۢا بِغَيۡرِ نَفۡسٍ اَوۡ فَسَادٍ فِى
الۡاَرۡضِ فَكَاَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيۡعًا ؕ وَمَنۡ اَحۡيَاهَا فَكَاَنَّمَاۤ اَحۡيَا النَّاسَ جَمِيۡعًا ؕ وَلَقَدۡ جَآءَتۡهُمۡ
رُسُلُنَا بِالۡبَيِّنٰتِ ۫ ثُمَّ اِنَّ كَثِيۡرًا مِّنۡهُمۡ بَعۡدَ ذٰلِكَ فِى الۡاَرۡضِ لَمُسۡرِفُوۡنَ ۝٣٢

(5-32) Therefore We ordained for the Children of Israel (53) that he who slays a soul unless it be (in punishment) for murder or for spreading mischief on earth shall be as if he had slain all mankind; and he who saves a life shall be as if he had given life to all mankind. (54) And indeed again and again did Our Messengers come to them with clear directives; yet many of them continued to commit excesses on earth.

(53) Since the same qualities which had been displayed by the wrong doing son of Adam were manifest in the Children of Israel, God strongly urged them not to kill human beings and couched His command in forceful terms. It is a pity that the precious words which embody God's ordinance are to be found nowhere in the Bible today. The Talmud, however, does mention this subject in the following words:

To him who kills a single individual of Israel, it shall be reckoned as if he had slain the whole race and he who preserves a single individual of Israel, it shall be reckoned in the Book of God as if he had preserved the whole world. The Talmud also

mentions that in trials for murder, the Israelite judges used to address the witnesses as follows:

Whoever kills one person, merits punishment as if he had slain all the men in the world.

(54) This means that the survival of human life depends on everyone respecting other human beings and in contributing actively to the survival and protection of others. Whosoever kills unrighteously is thus not merely guilty of doing wrong to one single person, but proves by his act that his heart is devoid of respect for human life and of sympathy for the human species as such. Such a person, therefore, is an enemy of all mankind. This is so because he happens to be possessed of a quality which, were it to become common to all men, would lead to the destruction of the entire human race. The person who helps to preserve the life of even one person, on the other hand, is the protector of the whole of humanity, for he possesses a quality which is indispensable to the survival of mankind.

إِنَّمَا جَزٰٓؤُا الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللّٰهَ وَرَسُولَهٗ وَيَسۡعَوۡنَ فِى الۡاَرۡضِ فَسَادًا اَنۡ يُّقَتَّلُوۡٓا اَوۡ يُصَلَّبُوۡٓا اَوۡ تُقَطَّعَ اَيۡدِيۡهِمۡ وَاَرۡجُلُهُمۡ مِّنۡ خِلَافٍ اَوۡ يُنۡفَوۡا مِنَ الۡاَرۡضِ ؕ ذٰلِكَ لَهُمۡ خِزۡىٌ فِى الدُّنۡيَا وَلَهُمۡ فِى الۡاٰخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيۡمٌ ۙ ۳۳

(5-33) Those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger, and go about the earth spreading mischief (55) -indeed their recompense is that they either be done to death, or be crucified, or have their hands and feet cut off from the opposite sides or be banished from the land. (56) Such shall be their degradation in this world; and a mighty chastisement lies in store for them in the World to Come

(55) The 'land' signifies either the country or territory wherein the responsibility of establishing law and order has been undertaken by an Islamic state. The expression 'to wage war against Allah and His Messenger' denotes war against the righteous order established by the Islamic state. It is God's purpose, and it is for this very purpose that God sent His Messengers, that a righteous order of life be established on earth;

an order that would provide peace and security to everything found on earth; an order under whose benign shadow humanity would be able to attain its perfection; an order under which the resources of the earth would be exploited in a manner conducive to man's progress and prosperity rather than to his ruin and destruction. If anyone tried to disrupt such an order, whether on a limited scale by committing murder and destruction and robbery and brigandry or on a large scale by attempting to overthrow that order and establish some unrighteous order instead, he would in fact be guilty of waging war against God and His Messenger. All this is not unlike the situation where someone tries to overthrow the established government in a country. Such a person will be convicted of 'waging war against the state' even though his actual action may have been directed against an ordinary policeman in some remote part of the country, and irrespective of how remote the sovereign himself is from him.

(56) These penalties are mentioned here in brief merely to serve as guidelines to either judges or rulers so they may punish each criminal in accordance with the nature of his crime. The real purpose is to indicate that for any of those who live in the Islamic realm to attempt to overthrow the Islamic order is the worst kind of crime, for which any of the highly severe punishments may be imposed.

اِلَّا الَّذِيۡنَ تَابُوۡا مِنۡ قَبۡلِ اَنۡ تَقۡدِرُوۡا عَلَيۡهِمۡ‌ۚ فَاعۡلَمُوۡۤا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوۡرٌ رَّحِيۡمٌ ۝٣٤

(5-34) except for those who repent before you have overpowered them. Know well that Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate. (57)

(57) If they give up subversion and abandon their endeavor to disrupt or overthrow the righteous order, and their subsequent conduct shows that they have indeed become peace-loving, law-abiding citizens of good character, they need not be subjected to the punishments mentioned here even if any of their former crimes against the state should come to light. If their crime involves violation of the rights of other men they may not be

absolved from their guilt. If, for instance, they have either killed a person, seized someone's property or committed any other crime against human life or property they will be tried according to the criminal law of Islam. They will not, however, be accused of either rebellion and high treason or of waging war against God and His Messenger.

يَاَيُّهَا الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ ابۡتَغُوۡۤا اِلَيۡهِ الۡوَسِيۡلَةَ وَ جَاهِدُوۡا فِىۡ سَبِيۡلِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تُفۡلِحُوۡنَ ۝٣٥

(5-35) Believers! Fear Allah and seek the means to come near to Him, (58) and strive hard in His way; (59) maybe you will attain true success.

(58) People are urged to solicit all means which might bring them close to God and enable them to please Him.

(59) The English imperative 'strive hard' does not do full justice to the actual word used in the Qur'an: jahidu. The verbal form mujahadah signifies and carries the nuance of doing something in defiance of, or in opposition to someone. The true sense of the Qur'anic injunction 'strive hard' in the way of Allah is that the Muslims ought to use all their strength and engage in vigorous struggle against those forces which either forcefully prevent them from living in obedience to God or force them to live in obedience to others than God. It is this struggle which is likely to lead man to his true success and bring him to a close relationship with God.

This verse directs the believer to engage in a ceaseless, multifrontal struggle. On one side is the accursed Satan with his horde. Then comes the animal spirit of man, with its defiant and refractory desires. Then there are many men who have turned away from God, but with whom one is linked by social, cultural and economic ties. Then there are false religious, cultural and social systems which rest on rebellion against God and which force man to worship falsehood rather than Truth. These rebellious forces use different means to achieve their end, but those ends are always the same - to make men serve them rather than God. But man's true progress and his attainment of close communion with God depends entirely on his total obedience to

God, on his serving God unreservedly in the inner as well as in the external aspects of his life. He cannot achieve this objective without engaging in simultaneous combat with all the forces which are defiant and rebellious towards God, carrying on an unceasing struggle against them and trampling down all obstructions to his advancement along God's path.

اِنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡا لَوۡ اَنَّ لَهُمۡ مَّا فِى الۡاَرۡضِ جَمِيۡعًا وَّ مِثۡلَهٗ مَعَهٗ لِيَفۡتَدُوۡا بِهٖ مِنۡ عَذَابِ يَوۡمِ الۡقِيٰمَةِ مَا تُقُبِّلَ مِنۡهُمۡ ۚ وَ لَهُمۡ عَذَابٌ اَلِيۡمٌ ﴿۳۶﴾

(5-36) For those who disbelieved - even if they had all that is in the earth, and the like of it with it, and offered it all as ransom from chastisement on the Day of Resurrection, it will not be accepted of them - a painful chastisement lies in store for them.

يُرِيۡدُوۡنَ اَنۡ يَّخۡرُجُوۡا مِنَ النَّارِ وَ مَا هُمۡ بِخٰرِجِيۡنَ مِنۡهَا ۡ وَ لَهُمۡ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيۡمٌ ﴿۳۷﴾

(5-37) They will wish to come out of the Fire, but they will not. Theirs will be a long lasting chastisement.

وَ السَّارِقُ وَ السَّارِقَةُ فَاقۡطَعُوۡۤا اَيۡدِيَهُمَا جَزَآءًۢ بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِّنَ اللّٰهِ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ عَزِيۡزٌ حَكِيۡمٌ ﴿۳۸﴾

(5-38) As for the thief - male or female - cut off the hands of both. (60) This is a recompense for what they have done, and an exemplary punishment from Allah. Allah is All-Mighty, All-Wise.

(60) The injunction is to cut off one not both hands. There is consensus among jurists that in the event of the first theft the right hand should be cut off. This punishment has been laid down for theft alone. The Prophet (peace be on him) declared: "There is no cutting off of a hand for he who embezzles.' (Abu Da'ud, 'Hudud', 14; Tirmidhi, 'Hudud', 18; Ibn Majah, 'Hudud', 36; Nasa'i, 'Qat' al-Sariq', 13 - Ed.) This shows that the punishment prescribed for theft does not cover acts involving embezzlement and other dishonest practices. It is applicable only to acts involving the seizure, by stealth, of someone else's property.

The Prophet (peace be on him) also instructed that the punishment of cutting off a hand should not be applied in cases where the value of the article stolen is less than that of a shield. In the time of the Prophet (peace be on him) according to a tradition from Ibn 'Abbas, this was ten dirhams; according to a tradition from Ibn 'Umar, it was three dirhams; according to a tradition from Anas b. Malik, it was five dirhams; and according to another tradition from 'A'ishah, it was a quarter of a dinar. Owing to this discrepancy, there is disagreement among jurists regarding the minimum value of the goods stolen which merits the punishment of cutting off a hand. This value, according to Abu Hanifah, is ten dirhams whereas according to Malik, Shafi'i and Ahmad b. Hanbal, it is one quarter of a dinar (three dirhams). (For traditions on objects and amounts of things on which the hand of the thief is to be cut off, see Bukhari, 'Hudud', 13; Muslim, 'Hudud', 1-7; Abu Da'ud, 'Hudud', 12, 13; Tirmidhi, 'Hudud', 16; Nasa'i, 'Qat' al-Sariq', 5, 8-10 - Ed.)

Moreover, there are several things the theft of which would not necessitate cutting off a hand. The Prophet (peace be on him) directed, for instance, that no hand should be cut off if the stolen article was food. According to a tradition from 'A'ishah: '(The hand of) the thief was not cut off during the time of the Messenger of Allah for the theft of trivial things.' (Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 3, p. 464; Darimi, 'Hudud', 4, 7 - Ed.) Furthermore, 'Ali and 'Uthman gave the judgement - and none of the Companions disagreed with it - that a person's hand should not be cut off for stealing birds. 'Umar and 'Ali did not cut off the hands of those who had stolen from the public treasury, and on this question no disagreement on the part of any Companion has been reported. On these grounds the founders of the schools of Islamic Law exempted certain things from the application of this penal injunction.

According to Abu Hanifah a man's hand should not be cut off for stealing vegetables, fruit, meat, cooked food, grain which is not stored in a barn, and instruments of music and play. Likewise, he is of the opinion that a hand should not be cut off for either stealing animals grazing in the forest or for stealing from the

public treasury. The founders of the other schools of Islamic Law have also exempted the stealing of certain things from the punishment of cutting off a hand. But this exemption does not mean that the guilty parties should receive no punishment at all. (See the commentaries of Ibn Kathir, Ibn al-'Arabi, Qurtubi and Jassas on this verse. See also Ibn Rushd, Bidayat al-Mujtahid, vol. 2, pp. 441 ff. - Ed.)

فَمَنْ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهٖ وَاَصْلَحَ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَتُوْبُ عَلَيْهِ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ۝٣٩

(5-39) But he who repents after he has committed wrong, and makes amends, Allah will graciously turn to him. (61) Truly Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.

(61) Forgiveness on the part of Allah does not mean that the hand of the thief should not be cut off. It means rather that one who repents and becomes righteous by purging his soul of the sin of stealing will be spared the wrath of God, Who will remove the stain of that sin from him. But if after his hand has been cut off the person concerned does not purge himself of evil intent and continues to nurture the same impure feelings which led to his stealing and thus to the cutting off of his hand, it is evident that even though his hand has been severed from his body, stealing remains ingrained in his soul. The result will be that he will continue to merit God's wrath as he did before his hand was cut off. The Qur'an therefore directs the thief to seek pardon from God and to try to reform himself. For the hand of that thief was cut off for the sake of the judicious administration of human society and the cutting off of a hand did not automatically purify the soul of the person on whom the punishment was carried out. Purity of soul can be achieved only by repentance and turning oneself to God. Traditions mention that after the hand of a thief had been cut off in compliance with the Prophet's order, he was summoned by the Prophet (peace be on him) himself who said to him: 'Say: "I seek pardon from God, and to Him do I turn in repentance.'" The thief uttered these words as directed by the Prophet (peace be on him) who then prayed for the thief, saying: 'O God, accept his repentance.' (Abu Da'ud, 'Hudud', 8 - Ed.)

اَلَمۡ تَعۡلَمۡ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ لَهٗ مُلۡكُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ ؕ يُعَذِّبُ مَنۡ يَّشَآءُ وَيَغۡفِرُ لِمَنۡ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىۡءٍ قَدِيۡرٌ ۴۰

(5-40) Do you not know that to Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth? He chastises whom He wills and forgives whom He wills. Allah is All-Powerful.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الرَّسُوۡلُ لَا يَحۡزُنۡكَ الَّذِيۡنَ يُسَارِعُوۡنَ فِى الۡكُفۡرِ مِنَ الَّذِيۡنَ قَالُوۡۤا اٰمَنَّا بِاَفۡوَاهِهِمۡ وَلَمۡ تُؤۡمِنۡ قُلُوۡبُهُمۡ ۛ وَمِنَ الَّذِيۡنَ هَادُوۡا ۛ سَمّٰعُوۡنَ لِلۡكَذِبِ سَمّٰعُوۡنَ لِقَوۡمٍ اٰخَرِيۡنَ ۙ لَمۡ يَاۡتُوۡكَ ؕ يُحَرِّفُوۡنَ الۡكَلِمَ مِنۡۢ بَعۡدِ مَوَاضِعِهٖ ۚ يَقُوۡلُوۡنَ اِنۡ اُوۡتِيۡتُمۡ هٰذَا فَخُذُوۡهُ وَاِنۡ لَّمۡ تُؤۡتَوۡهُ فَاحۡذَرُوۡا ؕ وَمَنۡ يُّرِدِ اللّٰهُ فِتۡنَتَهٗ فَلَنۡ تَمۡلِكَ لَهٗ مِنَ اللّٰهِ شَيۡـًٔا ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ الَّذِيۡنَ لَمۡ يُرِدِ اللّٰهُ اَنۡ يُّطَهِّرَ قُلُوۡبَهُمۡ ؕ لَهُمۡ فِى الدُّنۡيَا خِزۡىٌ وَّلَهُمۡ فِى الۡاٰخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيۡمٌ ۴۱

(5-41) O Messenger! Do not be grieved on account of those who vie with one another in disbelieving: (62) even though they be those who say with their mouths: 'We believe' even though their hearts have no faith; or they be Jews who have their ears eagerly turned to falsehood (63) and spy for other people who did not chance to come to you, (64) who pervert the words of Allah, taking them out of their proper context in order to distort their meaning. (65) They say to people: 'If such and such teaching is given to you, accept it; if you are not given that, then beware! (66) You can be of no avail to him whom Allah wills to fall into error. (67) Those are the ones whose hearts Allah does not want to purify. (68) For them there is degradation in this world and a mighty chastisement in the Next.

(62) This verse refers to those who devoted all their capacities and efforts to ensure that the status quo ante of Jahiliyah remained intact, and that the reformative mission of Islam should fail to set right the corruption that had come down to them from the past. Disregarding all moral scruples, these people used the vilest methods against the Prophet (peace be on him). They deliberately suppressed the truth and resorted to lying, deceit, treachery and low cunning in order to frustrate the mission of the Prophet (peace be on him) who was engaged in a tireless struggle actuated by absolute selflessness and benevolence, and who sought the welfare of all human beings, including that of his opponents. All this naturally hurt the Prophet (peace be on him). A

sincere person must feel heartbroken when he sees men of low moral character, driven by ignorance, blind selfishness and bigotry, resort to vile methods in opposition to his mission, which is actuated by charity and goodwill towards all men. Hence the purpose of God's directive here is not to ask the Prophet (peace be on him) to abstain from this natural feeling of grief but rather that he should not allow such feelings to undermine his morale and that he should persevere in his task. As for the opponents of the Prophet (peace be on him), in view of their low morals, their mean conduct was not at all contrary to expectations.

(63) This has two meanings. First, that since such people are slaves to their desires they cannot have the least interest in the Truth, falsehood alone gratifies them. It is with falsehood alone that they like to fill their ears, for nothing else quenches the thirst of their souls. Second, it is the same love of falsehood which motivates them when they come and spend some time in the company of the Prophet (peace be on him) and the Muslims. They want to distort whatever they see or hear, to taint the facts with their fabrications, and then circulate them among those who have had no contact with the Prophet (peace be on him) and the Muslims in order to scandalize them.

(64) This also has two meanings. First, that they socialized with the Prophet (peace be on him) and the Muslims in order to pry into their affairs and communicate them to the enemy. Second, that they went about collecting information to try to slander them. Their objective was to create misgivings about the Prophet (peace be on him) and the Muslims among those who were unacquainted with them.

(65) They deliberately tamper with those injunctions of the Torah that do not accord with their desires, and by altering the meanings of the words occurring in the text they deduce laws that suit their interests.

(66) This refers to the Jews who went about telling the ignorant masses that they should follow the teachings of the Prophet

(peace be on him) only if they conformed to the teachings of the Jews.

(67) God's will to put someone to the test means that God confronts one in whom He sees the growth of evil with the opportunities of doing just that, so that he experiences the struggle between good and evil. If the person is not yet fully inclined towards evil, his moral health improves and his latent potentialities for resisting evil are revived. But if he has become excessively inclined towards evil, and goodness has been totally crushed from within his being, then every such test is bound to entangle him still more tightly in evil. The well-wisher is now powerless to rescue him. It might be added that not only individuals but also nations are put to this kind of test.

(68) God did not will that their hearts be purified for they themselves did not want them to be purified. It is not God's way to deprive of purity those who love it and strive for it; but God does not wish to purify those who do not seek their own purification.

سَمّٰعُوۡنَ لِلۡكَذِبِ اَكّٰلُوۡنَ لِلسُّحۡتِ ؕ فَاِنۡ جَآءُوۡكَ فَاحۡكُمۡ بَيۡنَهُمۡ اَوۡ اَعۡرِضۡ عَنۡهُمۡ ۚ وَاِنۡ تُعۡرِضۡ عَنۡهُمۡ فَلَنۡ يَّضُرُّوۡكَ شَيۡـًٔا ؕ وَاِنۡ حَكَمۡتَ فَاحۡكُمۡ بَيۡنَهُمۡ بِالۡقِسۡطِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يُحِبُّ الۡمُقۡسِطِيۡنَ ۝۴۲

(5-42) They are listeners of falsehood and greedy devourers of unlawful earnings. (69) If they come to you you may either judge between them or turn away from them. And were you to turn away from them they shall not be able to harm you; and were you to judge between them judge with justice. Surely Allah loves the just. (70)

(69) Here pointed reference is made to judges and jurisconsults who accept false evidence and invent reports in order to issue verdicts contrary to justice and in favor of either those who bribe them or with whom their illegitimate interests lie.

(70) Until then the Jews had not become full-fledged subjects of the Islamic state. Their relations with that state were based on

agreements according to which the Jews were to enjoy internal autonomy, and their disputes were to be decided by their own judges and in accordance with their own laws. They were not legally bound to place their disputes either before the Prophet (peace be on him) for adjudication or before the judges appointed by him. But in cases where it appeared against their interests to have their disputes judged according to their own religious law they approached the Prophet (peace be on him) in the hope that the Prophet might have a different ruling.

The particular case referred to here was that of a woman belonging to a respectable family, who was found to be involved in an unlawful sexual relationship with a man. The punishment for this in the Torah was that both be stoned to death (see Deuteronomy 22: 23-4). But the Jews did not want to enforce this punishment. Hence they deliberated among themselves and decided to put the case before the Prophet (peace be on him), with the reservation that his judgement be accepted only if it was other than stoning. The Prophet (peace be on him) decided that the punishment should, in fact, be stoning. When the Jews declined to accept the judgement, the Prophet (peace be on him) asked their rabbis what punishment had been prescribed for such a case in their religion. They replied that it was to strike the culprit with lashes, to blacken the face and to make the person concerned ride on a donkey. The Prophet (peace be on him) asked them under oath if the Torah had indeed prescribed that as punishment for adultery committed by married men and women. They repeated the same false reply. However, one of them called Ibn Sawriya who, according to the Jews themselves, was the greatest living scholar of the Torah at that time, kept silent. The Prophet (peace be on him) asked him to state on oath in the name of God, Who had emancipated them from Pharaoh and had given them the Law, whether the punishment for adultery provided for in the Torah was what they had mentioned. He replied: 'Had you not put me under such a heavy oath, I would not have volunteered the correct information. The fact is that the prescribed punishment for adultery is indeed stoning, but when adultery became common among us our rulers adopted the rule that when respectable people committed adultery they were left unpunished, whereas

when ordinary people were convicted they were punished by stoning. Later on when this caused resentment among the common people we altered the law of the Torah and adopted the rule that adulterers and adulteresses would be lashed, their faces would be blackened, and they would be made to ride on donkeys, seated in a backward-looking position.' This left the Jews with nothing to say and the adulterer and adulteress were, in accordance with the order of the Prophet (peace be on him), stoned to death. (Ibn Kathir, Tafsir, vol. 3, pp. 574-5 - Ed.)

وَ كَيۡ فَ يُحَكِّمُوۡ نَكَ وَ عِنۡدَ هُمُ التَّوۡرٰىۃُ فِيۡهَا حُكۡمُ اللّٰهِ ثُمَّ يَتَوَلَّوۡنَ مِنۡ بَعۡدِ ذٰلِكَ ؕ وَ مَاۤ اُولٰٓئِكَ بِالۡمُؤۡمِنِيۡنَ ﴿۴۳﴾

(5-43) Yet how will they appoint you a judge when they have the Torah with them, wherein there is Allah's judgement - and still they turn away from it?[71] The fact is, they are not believers.

(71) In this verse, God unmasks completely the dishonesty of these people. It shows how these so-called religious people who had cast the spell of their religious piety and knowledge of the Scriptures over the whole of Arabia had set aside a categorical injunction of the book which they themselves recognized to be the Book of God, and which they professed to believe in. They had referred that judicial case to the Prophet (peace be on him) for his decision even though they vehemently denied his prophethood. This made it quite clear that there was nothing to which they subscribed sincerely. Their true religion consisted merely of worshipping their interests and desires. They were ready to turn their backs upon the very book which they recognized as the Book of God merely because some of its injunctions were unpalatable to them, and in such cases they did not mind approaching one whom they regarded as an imposter (may God be our refuge from such a blasphemy) in the hope that they might be able to obtain a judgement to their liking.

اِنَّاۤ اَنۡزَلۡنَا التَّوۡرٰىۃَ فِيۡهَا هُدًى وَّ نُوۡرٌ ۚ يَحۡكُمُ بِهَا النَّبِيُّوۡنَ الَّذِيۡنَ اَسۡلَمُوۡا لِلَّذِيۡنَ هَادُوۡا وَ الرَّبّٰنِيُّوۡنَ وَ الۡاَحۡبَارُ بِمَا اسۡتُحۡفِظُوۡا مِنۡ كِتٰبِ اللّٰهِ وَ كَانُوۡا عَلَيۡهِ شُهَدَآءَ ۚ فَلَا تَخۡشَوُا النَّاسَ وَ اخۡشَوۡنِ وَ لَا تَشۡتَرُوۡا بِاٰيٰتِىۡ ثَمَنًا قَلِيۡلًا ؕ وَ مَنۡ لَّمۡ يَحۡكُمۡ بِمَاۤ اَنۡزَلَ اللّٰهُ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الۡكٰفِرُوۡنَ ﴿۴۴﴾

(5-44) Surely We revealed the Torah, wherein there is guidance and light. Thereby did Prophets - who had submitted themselves (to Allah) - judge for the Judaized folk; (72) and so did the scholars and jurists. (73) They judged by the Book of Allah for they had been entrusted to keep it, and bear witness to it. So (O Jews!) do not fear men but fear Me, and do not barter away My signs for a trivial gain. Those who do not judge by what Allah has revealed are indeed the unbelievers.

(72) Here the verse tells the Jews that all the Prophets were Muslims (submitters to God) whereas the Jews had deviated from Islam (submission to God), and true to their chauvinistic sectarianism, were content with remaining merely 'Jews'.

(73) Rabbani = religious scholars, theologians. Ahbar = religious jurists.

وَ كَتَبۡنَا عَلَيۡهِمۡ فِيۡهَاۤ اَنَّ النَّفۡسَ بِالنَّفۡسِ ۙ وَ الۡعَيۡنَ بِالۡعَيۡنِ وَ الۡاَنۡفَ بِالۡاَنۡفِ وَ الۡاُذُنَ بِالۡاُذُنِ وَ السِّنَّ بِالسِّنِّ ۙ وَ الۡجُرُوۡحَ قِصَاصٌ ؕ فَمَنۡ تَصَدَّقَ بِهٖ فَهُوَ كَفَّارَةٌ لَّهٗ ؕ وَ مَنۡ لَّمۡ يَحۡكُمۡ بِمَاۤ اَنۡزَلَ اللّٰهُ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الظّٰلِمُوۡنَ ۴۵

(5-45) And therein We had ordained for them: 'A life for a life, and an eye for an eye, and a nose for a nose, and an ear for an ear, and a tooth for a tooth, and for all wounds, like for like. (74) But whosoever forgoes it by way of charity, it will be for him an expiation. (75) Those who do not judge by what Allah has revealed are indeed the wrong-doers.

(74) Cf. Exodus 21: 23-5.

(75) Whoever forgoes his right of retaliation does a good deed which will atone for many of his sins. The same is confirmed by a tradition of the Prophet (peace be on him) in which he said: 'Whoever receives an injury on his body, then pardons (the inflictor of the injury), his sins are atoned for to the measure of his pardoning.' (Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 5, pp. 316, 329 - Ed.)

وَ قَفَّيۡنَا عَلٰۤى اٰثَارِهِمۡ بِعِيۡسَى ابۡنِ مَرۡيَمَ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيۡنَ يَدَيۡهِ مِنَ التَّوۡرٰىةِ ۫ وَ اٰتَيۡنٰهُ الۡاِنۡجِيۡلَ فِيۡهِ هُدًى وَّ نُوۡرٌ ۙ وَّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيۡنَ يَدَيۡهِ مِنَ التَّوۡرٰىةِ وَ هُدًى وَّ مَوۡعِظَةً لِّلۡمُتَّقِيۡنَ ۴۶

(5-46) And We sent Jesus, the son of Mary, after those Prophets, confirming the truth of whatever there still remained of the Torah. And We gave him the Gospel, wherein is guidance and light, and which confirms the truth of whatever there still remained of the Torah, (76) and a guidance and admonition for the God-fearing.

(76) The Messiah did not expound a new religion. That very religion which had been the religion of all the Prophets was also his religion, and it is towards that religion that he called people. He believed in the true teachings of the Torah which were extant in his time, and the Gospels (Injil) confirm this (see, for example, Matthew 5- 17-18). The Qur'an repeatedly stresses the fundamental fact that none of the Prophets of God, no matter in which part of the world they appeared, denied the Prophets who had preceded them. On the contrary, each Prophet confirmed the message of his predecessors and sought to promote the mission which was the sacred legacy of them all. God did not reveal any of the Books in order to repudiate the previous ones; each confirmed and supported the preceding ones.

وَلۡيَحۡكُمَ اَهۡلُ الۡاِنۡجِيۡلِ بِمَاۤ اَنۡزَلَ اللّٰهُ فِيۡهِ ؕ وَمَنۡ لَّمۡ يَحۡكُمۡ بِمَاۤ اَنۡزَلَ اللّٰهُ فَاُولٰٓئِكَ هُمُ الۡفٰسِقُوۡنَ ۴۷

(5-47) Let the followers of the Gospel judge by what Allah has revealed therein, and those who do not judge by what Allah has revealed are the transgressors. (77)

(77) Here three judgements are issued against those who do not judge in accordance with the Law revealed by God. The first is that they are kafir (unbelievers); the second, that they are zalim (wrong-doers); and the third, that they are fasiq (transgressors). This clearly means that one who, in disregard of God's commandments and of the Laws revealed by Him, pronounces judgements according to man-made laws (whether made by himself or by others) is guilty of three major offences. First, his act amounts to rejecting the commandment of God, and this rejection is equivalent to kufr (infidelity, unbelief). Second, his act

is contrary to justice, for only the laws made by God are in complete accord with the dictates of justice. Any judgement in contravention of God's injunctions amounts, therefore, to committing injustice (zulm). Third, when he enforces either his own or anyone else's law in disregard of the Laws of his Lord he steps out of the fold of subjection and obedience, and this constitutes fisq (transgression).

Kufr, zulm and fisq are essential elements in deviation from God's commandments. One finds them wherever there is deviation from the commandment of God. There is variation in the degree of deviation and hence in the degree of these three offences. Whoever passes judgement on something in opposition to an injunction of God, believing that injunction to be false, and holds either his own or anyone else's judgement to be sound, is an unbeliever (kafir), wrong-doer (zalim) and transgressor (fasiq). A man who is convinced that the injunctions of God are right but makes judgements contrary to them in practice is not an unbeliever in the sense that he ceases to remain a member of the Islamic community, but he is guilty of adulterating his faith by blending it with kufr, zulm and fisq. In the same manner, those who deviate from the injunctions of God in all matters are unbelievers, wrong-doers and transgressors. For those who are obedient in some respects and disobedient in others, the blending of faith and submission to God with the opposite attributes of unbelief, wrong-doing and transgression in their lives will be exactly in proportion to the mixture of their obedience to and their deviation from God's commands.

Some commentators have attempted to restrict the application of these verses to the People of the Book alone. The verses, however, hardly lend themselves to such a restrictive interpretation. The best answer to such a restrictive interpretation has been given by the Companion Hudhayfah. When someone told him that these verses related merely to the Israelites, meaning that the unbelievers, wrong-doers and transgressors were only the Jews who passed judgement contrary to the injunctions revealed by God, Hudhayfah remarked: 'What good brothers these Israelites are to you! Whatever is bitter goes to

them; whatever is sweet comes to you. Nay, by God, you will follow their way, your steps following theirs.'

وَ اَنۡزَلۡنَاۤ اِلَيۡكَ الۡكِتٰبَ بِالۡحَقِّ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيۡنَ يَدَيۡهِ مِنَ الۡكِتٰبِ وَ مُهَيۡمِنًا عَلَيۡهِ فَاحۡكُمۡ بَيۡنَهُمۡ
بِمَاۤ اَنۡزَلَ اللّٰهُ وَ لَا تَتَّبِعۡ اَهۡوَآءَهُمۡ عَمَّا جَآءَكَ مِنَ الۡحَقِّ ؕ لِكُلٍّ جَعَلۡنَا مِنۡكُمۡ شِرۡعَةً وَّ مِنۡهَاجًا ؕ وَ
لَوۡ شَآءَ اللّٰهُ لَجَعَلَكُمۡ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً وَّ لٰكِنۡ لِّيَبۡلُوَكُمۡ فِىۡ مَاۤ اٰتٰىكُمۡ فَاسۡتَبِقُوا الۡخَيۡرٰتِ ؕ اِلَى اللّٰهِ
مَرۡجِعُكُمۡ جَمِيۡعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمۡ بِمَا كُنۡتُمۡ فِيۡهِ تَخۡتَلِفُوۡنَ ۙ﴿۴۸﴾

(5-48) Then We revealed the Book to you (O Muhammad!) with Truth, confirming whatever of the Book was revealed before, (78) and protecting and guarding over it. (79) Judge, then, in the affairs of men in accordance with the Law that Allah has revealed, and do not follow their desires in disregard of the Truth which has come to you. For each of you We have appointed a Law and a way of life. (80) And had Allah so willed, He would surely have made you one single community; instead, (He gave each of you a Law and a way of life) in order to test you by what He gave you. Vie, then, one with another in good works. Unto Allah is the return of all of you; and He will then make you understand the truth concerning the matters on which you disagreed. (81)

(78) This points to a fact of major significance. It could also have been said that the Qur'an confirms all those parts of the earlier divine books which are still extant in their true and original form. But the sense has been conveyed by employing the word 'the Book' rather than 'the previous Books'. This expression reveals that the Qur'an and all those Books sent down by God at various times and in different languages in reality constitute one and the same Book. Their Author is one and the same; their aim and purpose are the same; their teaching is the same; and the knowledge which they seek to impart to mankind is the same. The difference between these Books lies in their modes of expression, and this was necessarily so since they were addressed to different audiences. It is, therefore, not merely that these divine books support rather than contradict each other but that they are actually different editions of one and the same book - 'the Book'.

(79) In Arabic, haymana, yuhayminu, hayamanah signify 'to protect, to witness, to keep trust, to back and to support'. The

expression 'haymana al-rajul al-shay' means that the man protected and guarded the thing. Likewise, 'haymana al-ta'ir 'alafirdkhih' means that the bird took its young ones under the protection of its wings. Once 'Umar said to the people: 'Inni da'in fa hayminu' ('I am praying; support me by saying amen'). To say that the Qur'an is muhaymin of al-kitab means that it preserves all the true teachings of the earlier divine books; that it has secured them from loss. The Qur'an also confirms those Books in that the contents of the Qur'an testify to the truth of those parts which are indeed from God. The Qur'an is, further, a witness over those Books in the sense that, with its help, the elements which embody true revelations from God can be distinguished from the accretions which have corrupted them. Whatever in these Books accords with the Qur'an is from God, and whatever is not in conformity with it is from human beings.

(80) This is a parenthetical phrase, the purpose of which is to elucidate a question which is likely to arise in the mind of the reader who has read the above section and might feel uneasy. The question is: Why do the religious laws propounded by the various Prophets differ in matters of detail even though the Prophets and their Books preach one and the same religion (din) and even confirm and support each other? Why is it that in regard to the prescribed forms of worship, the regulations concerning what is permitted and what is prohibited, and the detailed legal regulations governing the social and collective life, there is some disagreement among the various laws propounded by the different Prophets and the divine Books?

(81) This constitutes a detailed answer to the above question (see n. 80). It consists of the following points:

(1) It is a mistake to think that variations in religious laws result from a difference of source. It is God Himself Who altered the legal prescriptions to suit different nations at different times and in different circumstances.

(2) It was indeed possible, by devising one legal code for all human beings, for all men to have been made into one nation (ummah). But one of the many benevolent

considerations keeping the religious laws of various Prophets different from one another was that God wanted this difference to become a means of testing people. Those who understand true religion, who have grasped its spirit and essence, and who are aware of the true importance of the different legal prescriptions, always recognize the Truth and accept it whatever its form. They have no hesitation in accepting the new ordinances of God in place of the old ones, in contrast to those who are not conversant with the spirit of true religion and who seem to identify it with a specific body of legal minutiae. Such people have overlaid God-given principles with their own legal deductions, and have sub sequently fossilized this entire amalgam, seeking to preserve it in its entirety. They have grown so attached to it that, in order to preserve it, they spurn every directive which subsequently comes to them from God. In order to distinguish the people of the first category from those of the second God made the legal prescriptions of the various Prophets vary.

(3) The real purpose of all the divine religious laws is the attainment of goodness and righteousness. This purpose can be achieved only when a man obeys whatever commandment he receives from God at a particular time. The proper mode of conduct for people who keep their eyes fixed on this true purpose is to strive for God's good pleasure rather than quarrel about differences in the legal prescriptions of the various Prophets.

(4) The differences which have arisen because of the unjustified rigidity, prejudice, obduracy and erroneous attitudes of the human mind can be finally settled neither in the debating hall nor on the battlefield. The final judgement will be made by God Himself. Then the reality of everything will be fully uncovered, and it will be clear how much truth and falsehood underlay the squabbles which whole lives were wasted over.

وَ اَنِ احۡ كُمۡ بَيۡ نَهُمۡ بِمَ آ اَنۡزَلَ اللّٰهُ وَ لَا تَتَّبِعۡ اَهۡوَآءَهُمۡ وَاحۡذَرۡهُمۡ اَنۡ يَّفۡتِنُوۡ كَ عَنۡ بَعۡ ضِ مَ آ اَنۡزَلَ اللّٰهُ اِلَيۡ كَ ؕ فَاِنۡ تَوَلَّوۡ ا فَاعۡ لَمۡ اَنَّمَا يُرِيۡدُ اللّٰهُ اَنۡ يُّصِيۡبَهُمۡ بِبَعۡ ضِ ذُنُوۡبِهِمۡ ؕ وَ اِنَّ كَثِيۡرًا مِّنَ النَّاسِ لَفٰسِقُوۡنَ ۴۹

(5-49) Therefore, judge bet-ween them (O Muhammad!) [82] by what Allah has revealed and do not follow their desires, and beware lest they tempt you away from anything of what Allah has revealed to you. And if they turn away, then know well that Allah has indeed decided to afflict them for some of their sins. For surely many of them are transgressors.

(82) Following this parenthetical clause, the previous subject is resumed.

اَفَحُكۡمَ الۡجَاهِلِيَّةِ يَبۡغُوۡنَ ؕ وَمَنۡ اَحۡسَنُ مِنَ اللّٰهِ حُكۡمًا لِّقَوۡمٍ يُّوۡقِنُوۡنَ ۝۵۰

(5-50) (If they turn away from the Law of Allah) do they desire judgement according to the Law of Ignorance? [83] But for those who have certainty of belief whose judgement can be better than Allah's?

(83) The word jahiliyah (literally 'ignorance') is used as an antonym to Islam. Islam is the way of 'ilm (true knowledge), since it is God Himself Who has shown this way, and His knowledge embraces everything. In contrast is the way that diverges from Islam - the path of Ignorance (jahiliyah). The pre-Islamic period in Arabia is designated as jahiliyah because this was the era when human beings derived their norms from either superstitious beliefs, conjectures and imagination or from their desires. Whenever such an attitude is adopted, it is bound to be designated as Ignorance. The appellation 'jahiliyah' will apply to every aspect of life which is developed in disregard of the knowledge made available by God, based only on man's partial knowledge blended with imagination, superstitious fancies, conjectures and desires.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الۡيَهُوۡدَ وَ النَّصٰرٰٓى اَوۡلِيَآءَ ۘ بَعۡضُهُمۡ اَوۡلِيَآءُ بَعۡضٍ ؕ وَمَنۡ يَّتَوَلَّهُمۡ مِّنۡكُمۡ فَاِنَّهٗ مِنۡهُمۡ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهۡدِى الۡقَوۡمَ الظّٰلِمِيۡنَ ﴿۵۱﴾

(5-51) Believers! Do not take the Jews and the Christians for your allies. They are the allies of each other. And among you he who takes them for allies, shall be regarded as one of them. Allah does not guide the wrong-doers.

فَتَرَى الَّذِيۡنَ فِىۡ قُلُوۡبِهِمۡ مَّرَضٌ يُّسَارِعُوۡنَ فِيۡهِمۡ يَقُوۡلُوۡنَ نَخۡشٰٓى اَنۡ تُصِيۡبَنَا دَآئِرَةٌ ؕ فَعَسَى اللّٰهُ اَنۡ يَّاۡتِىَ بِالۡفَتۡحِ اَوۡ اَمۡرٍ مِّنۡ عِنۡدِهٖ فَيُصۡبِحُوۡا عَلٰى مَاۤ اَسَرُّوۡا فِىۡۤ اَنۡفُسِهِمۡ نٰدِمِيۡنَ ﴿۵۲﴾

(5-52) Indeed you see those afflicted with the disease of hypocrisy race towards them, saying: 'We fear lest some misfortune overtakes us. (84) And it may happen that Allah will either bring you a decisive victory or bring about something else from Himself? (85) and then they will feel remorseful at their hypocrisy which they have kept concealed in their breasts -

(84) The outcome of the conflict in Arabia between Islam and unbelief (kufr) had not crystallized. Although Islam had become a formidable force owing to the daring, courage and sacrifices of its followers, the forces opposed to it were also tremendously powerful. To an objective observer it must have seemed that either party had an equal chance of success, and so the hypocrites, apparently an integral part of the Muslim body politic, sought to maintain good relations with the Jews and the. Christians as well. They expected refuge and protection from the Jews in case Islam was defeated. Moreover, the Jews and Christians held the greatest economic power in Arabia insofar as the banking system and the greenest and most fertile regions of Arabia were in their possession. For these reasons the hypocrites were keen to maintain good relations with them: they thought that to regard the conflict between Islam and unbelief as crucially important, and to sever their relations with all those currently in conflict with Islam, would be too great a risk both politically and economically.

85. They were looking for a conclusive victory, or at least something not far short of it, to inspire confidence that the conflict would end in favor of Islam.

وَ يَقُو ُ ل ُ الَّذِ ۡ ن َ اٰمَنُ ۡ ٓوا ۡ اَهٰٓؤُ ۡ لَآءِ الَّذِ ۡ ن َ اَ ۡ سَمُ ۡ وا ۡ بِاللّٰهِ جَهۡدَ اَيۡمَانِهِمۡ ۙ اِنَّهُمۡ لَمَعَكُمۡ ؕ حَبِطَتۡ اَعۡمَالُهُمۡ فَاَصۡبَحُ ۡ وا ۡ خٰسِرِيۡنَ ۵۳

(5-53) while those who believe will exclaim: 'Are these the self-same people who solemnly swore by Allah that they were with you?' All their acts have gone to waste and now they are the losers. (86)

(86) However much they might profess to follow Islam - by performing Prayers, by observing Fasts, by paying Zakah, by taking part in wars in the cause of God - all was reduced to naught because they had not devoted themselves to the service of the One True God. In pursuit of their worldly ambitions they had split their souls into two, distributing half to God and half to those in rebellion against Him.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِ ۡ ن َ اٰمَنُ ۡ وا ۡ مَنۡ يَّرۡتَدَّ مِ ۡ نۡكُمۡ عَنۡ دِيۡنِهٖ فَسَوۡفَ يَاۡتِى اللّٰهُ بِقَوۡمٍ يُّحِبُّهُمۡ وَ يُحِبُّوۡنَهٗۤ اَذِلَّةٍ عَلَى الۡمُؤۡمِنِيۡنَ اَعِزَّةٍ عَلَى الۡكٰفِرِيۡنَ يُجَاهِدُوۡنَ فِىۡ سَبِيۡلِ اللّٰهِ وَ لَا يَخَافُوۡنَ لَوۡمَةَ لَآئِمٍ ؕ ذٰلِكَ فَضۡلُ اللّٰهِ يُؤۡتِيۡهِ مَنۡ يَّشَآءُ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيۡمٌ ۵۴

(5-54) Believers! If any of you should ever turn away from your faith, remember that Allah will raise up a people whom He loves, and who love Him; a people humble towards the believers, and firm towards the unbelievers; (87) who will strive hard in the way of Allah and will not fear the reproach of the reproacher. (88) This is the favor of Allah which He grants to whom He wills. Allah is vast in resources, All-Knowing.

(87) To be 'humble towards believers' signifies that a person should never use his strength against the believers. His native intelligence, shrewdness, ability, influence, wealth, physical prowess should not be used for the purpose of either suppressing, persecuting or causing harm to the Muslims. Among themselves, the Muslims should always find him gentle, merciful, sympathetic and mild tempered.

To be 'firm towards unbelievers', on the contrary, means that by virtue of the intensity of his faith, the sincerity of his conviction, his strict adherence to his principles, his strength of character and his insight and perspicacity born of faith, a man should be firm as a rock in his dealings with the opponents of Islam, so that they find it impossible to dislodge him. There should be no doubt in their minds that the believer would rather lay down his life than compromise his position by yielding to external pressures.

(88) In following the religion of God, in implementing His injunctions, in judging things to be either right or wrong according to the criteria of the faith, the believer will be afraid of nothing. He will be impervious to opposition, reproach, denunciation, name-calling and scorn. Even when public opinion happens to be hostile, and his efforts to follow Islam single him out for the scorn of the whole world, the man of faith will still follow the way which he recognizes in his heart to be true.

اِنَّمَا وَلِيُّكُمُ اللّٰهُ وَ رَسُوۡلُهٗ وَ الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوا الَّذِيۡنَ يُقِيۡمُوۡنَ الصَّلٰوةَ وَ يُؤۡتُوۡنَ الزَّكٰوةَ وَ هُمۡ رٰكِعُوۡنَ ۝۵۵

(5-55) Only Allah, His Messenger, and those who believe and who establish Prayer, pay Zakah, and bow (before Allah) are your allies.

وَ مَنۡ يَّتَوَلَّ اللّٰهَ وَ رَسُوۡلَهٗ وَ الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا فَاِنَّ حِزۡبَ اللّٰهِ هُمُ الۡغٰلِبُوۡنَ ۝۵۶

(5-56) All those who take Allah and His Messenger and those who believe as their allies, should remember that the party of Allah will be triumphant.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا لَا تَتَّخِذُوا الَّذِيۡنَ اتَّخَذُوۡا دِيۡنَكُمۡ هُزُوًا وَّ لَعِبًا مِّنَ الَّذِيۡنَ اُوۡتُوا الۡكِتٰبَ مِنۡ قَبۡلِكُمۡ وَ الۡكُفَّارَ اَوۡلِيَآءَ ۚ وَ اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ اِنۡ كُنۡتُمۡ مُّؤۡمِنِيۡنَ ۝۵۷

(5-57) Believers! Do not take for your allies those who make a mockery and sport of your faith, be they those given the

Book before you or other unbelievers. Fear Allah if you indeed believe.

وَ اِذَا نَادَيۡتُمۡ اِلَى الصَّلٰوةِ اتَّخَذُوۡهَا هُزُوًا وَّ لَعِبًا ؕ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّهُمۡ قَوۡمٌ لَّا يَعۡقِلُوۡنَ ۝۵۸

(5-58) And when you call for Prayer, they take it for a mockery and sport. (89) That is because they are a people who do not understand. (90)

(89) When they hear the call to Prayer the unbelievers make fun of it by mimicry, pervert its words to ridicule it, and utter disparaging and taunting remarks about it.

(90) These are merely acts of stupidity on the part of unbelievers. Had they not been ignorant and foolish they would not have stooped to such base tactics, despite their significant differences with the Muslims on religious questions. After all, can any reasonable person be happy to see the people who call to the worship of God be ridiculed and mocked?

قُلۡ يٰۤاَهۡلَ الۡكِتٰبِ هَلۡ تَنۡقِمُوۡنَ مِنَّاۤ اِلَّاۤ اَنۡ اٰمَنَّا بِاللّٰهِ وَ مَاۤ اُنۡزِلَ اِلَيۡنَا وَ مَاۤ اُنۡزِلَ مِنۡ قَبۡلُ وَ اَنَّ اَكۡثَرَكُمۡ فٰسِقُوۡنَ ۝۵۹

(5-59) Say to them: 'People of the Book! Do you hate us for anything else except that we believe in Allah, and in the teaching which has been revealed to us and in the teaching which was revealed before? Indeed most of you are transgressors.'

قُلۡ هَلۡ اُنَبِّئُكُمۡ بِشَرٍّ مِّنۡ ذٰلِكَ مَثُوۡبَةً عِنۡدَ اللّٰهِ ؕ مَنۡ لَّعَنَهُ اللّٰهُ وَ غَضِبَ عَلَيۡهِ وَ جَعَلَ مِنۡهُمُ الۡقِرَدَةَ وَ الۡخَنَازِيۡرَ وَ عَبَدَ الطَّاغُوۡتَ ؕ اُولٰٓئِكَ شَرٌّ مَّكَانًا وَّ اَضَلُّ عَنۡ سَوَآءِ السَّبِيۡلِ ۝۶۰

(5-60) Then say to them: 'Shall I tell you about those whose retribution with Allah is even worse? They are the ones whom Allah has cursed, and who incurred His wrath and some of whom were changed into apes and swine, and who served the false deities. Such have an even worse rank and have strayed farther away from the right path. (91)

(91) This alludes to the Jews whose history shows that they were subjected, over and over again, to the wrath and scourge of God. When they desecrated the law of the Sabbath the faces of many of them were distorted, and subsequently their degeneration reached such a low point that they took to worshipping Satan quite openly. The purpose of saying all this is to draw attention to their criminal boldness while they had sunk to the lowest level of evil, transgression and moral decadence, they vigorously opposed all those who, thanks to their faith, lived a truly pious and righteous life.

وَ اِذَا جَآءُوۡكُمۡ قَالُوۡۤا اٰمَنَّا وَقَدۡ دَّخَلُوۡا بِالۡكُفۡرِ وَهُمۡ قَدۡ خَرَجُوۡا بِهٖ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ اَعۡلَمُ بِمَا كَانُوۡا يَكۡتُمُوۡنَ ﴿۶۱﴾

(5-61) Whenever they come to you they say: 'We believe,' whereas, in fact, they come disbelieving, and go away disbelieving, and Allah knows all that they hide.

وَ تَرٰى كَثِيۡرًا مِّنۡهُمۡ يُسَارِعُوۡنَ فِى الۡاِثۡمِ وَالۡعُدۡوَانِ وَاَكۡلِهِمُ السُّحۡتَ ؕ لَبِئۡسَ مَا كَانُوۡا يَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿۶۲﴾

(5-62) You will see many of them hastening towards sin and transgression and devouring unlawful earnings. Indeed what they do is evil.

لَوۡلَا يَنۡهٰهُمُ الرَّبّٰنِيُّوۡنَ وَالۡاَحۡبَارُ عَنۡ قَوۡلِهِمُ الۡاِثۡمَ وَاَكۡلِهِمُ السُّحۡتَ ؕ لَبِئۡسَ مَا كَانُوۡا يَصۡنَعُوۡنَ ﴿۶۳﴾

(5-63) Why is it that their scholars and jurists do not forbid them from sinful utterances and devouring unlawful earnings? Indeed they have been contriving evil.

وَ قَالَتِ الۡيَهُوۡدُ يَدُ اللّٰهِ مَغۡلُوۡلَةٌ ؕ غُلَّتۡ اَيۡدِيۡهِمۡ وَلُعِنُوۡا بِمَا قَالُوۡا ۘ بَلۡ يَدٰهُ مَبۡسُوۡطَتٰنِ ۙ يُنۡفِقُ كَيۡفَ يَشَآءُ ؕ وَلَيَزِيۡدَنَّ كَثِيۡرًا مِّنۡهُمۡ مَّاۤ اُنۡزِلَ اِلَيۡكَ مِنۡ رَّبِّكَ طُغۡيَانًا وَّكُفۡرًا ؕ وَاَلۡقَيۡنَا بَيۡنَهُمُ الۡعَدَاوَةَ وَالۡبَغۡضَآءَ اِلٰى يَوۡمِ الۡقِيٰمَةِ ؕ كُلَّمَاۤ اَوۡقَدُوۡا نَارًا لِّلۡحَرۡبِ اَطۡفَاَهَا اللّٰهُ ۙ وَيَسۡعَوۡنَ فِى الۡاَرۡضِ فَسَادًا ؕ وَاللّٰهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الۡمُفۡسِدِيۡنَ ﴿۶۴﴾

(5-64) The Jews say: 'The Hand of Allah is fettered. (92) It is their own hands which are fettered, (93) and they stand cursed for the evil they have uttered. (94) No! His Hands are outspread; He spends as He wills. Surely the message that has been revealed to you from your Lord has increased many of them in their insurgence and unbelief, (95) and so We have cast enmity and spite among them until the Day of Resurrection. And as often as they kindle the fire of war, Allah extinguishes it; and they go about trying to spread mischief on earth, whereas Allah does not love those who spread mischief.

(92) To say that someone's hands are tied, in Arabic usage, is to say that he is niggardly, that something prevents him from

being generous and bountiful. Thus the Jewish observation does not mean that God's Hand is literally tied but that He is niggardly and miserly. For centuries the Jews had lived in humiliation and misery. Their past greatness had become legend, seemingly too remote ever to be restored, and so they would blasphemously lament that God had become a miser and that as the door to His treasury was now permanently locked, that He had nothing to offer them except suffering and calamity. This attitude, however, is not confined to the Jews. When confronted with trials and tribulations foolish people of other nations, too, are prone to utter such blasphemies rather than turn to God with humble prayer and supplication.

(93) They accused God of the miserliness from which they themselves had suffered and had become notorious for.

(94) If they entertained the hope that by such insolent and taunting expressions they might evoke God's munificence, and that His bounties would begin to shower upon them, they were dreaming of the impossible. Indeed, such insolence was bound to have the opposite effect - to alienate them further from God's bounty, to cast them even further from His mercy.

(95) Instead of learning any lessons from the Book of God, instead of recognizing their own mistakes and wrongs and then trying to make amends for them, instead of probing their miserable situation and then turning to reform, they reacted by launching a violent campaign of opposition to truth and righteousness. Rather than take to the right way as a result of being reminded of the forgotten lesson of righteousness, they attempted to suppress the voice which sought to remind them and others of such things.

وَ لَوۡ اَنَّ اَہۡلَ الۡکِتٰبِ اٰمَنُوۡا وَ اتَّقَوۡا لَکَفَّرۡنَا عَنۡہُمۡ سَیِّاٰتِہِمۡ وَ لَاَدۡخَلۡنٰہُمۡ جَنّٰتِ النَّعِیۡمِ ﴿۶۵﴾

(5-65) Had the People of the Book only believed and been God-fearing, We should surely have effaced from them their evil deeds, and caused them to enter Gardens of Bliss.

وَلَوۡ اَنَّهُمۡ اَقَامُوا التَّوۡرٰىةَ وَالۡاِنۡجِيۡلَ وَمَاۤ اُنۡزِلَ اِلَيۡهِمۡ مِّنۡ رَّبِّهِمۡ لَاَكَلُوۡا مِنۡ فَوۡقِهِمۡ وَمِنۡ تَحۡتِ اَرۡجُلِهِمۡ ؕ مِنۡهُمۡ اُمَّةٌ مُّقۡتَصِدَةٌ ؕ وَكَثِيۡرٌ مِّنۡهُمۡ سَآءَ مَا يَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿۶۶﴾

(5-66) Had the People of the Book observed the Torah and the Gospel, and all that had been revealed to them from their Lord, sustenance would have been showered over them from above and risen from beneath their feet. (96) Some among them certainly keep to the right path; but many of them do things which are evil.

(96) In the Old Testament, Leviticus (Chapter 26) and Deuteronomy (Chapter 28) record a sermon of Moses in which he impresses upon Israel, in great detail, the bounties and blessings of God with which they would be endowed if they obeyed His commandments, and the afflictions, scourges and devastations that would descend upon them if they disobeyed Him and rejected the Book of God. That sermon of Moses is the best explanation of this verse of the Qur'an.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الرَّسُوۡلُ بَلِّغۡ مَاۤ اُنۡزِلَ اِلَيۡكَ مِنۡ رَّبِّكَ ؕ وَاِنۡ لَّمۡ تَفۡعَلۡ فَمَا بَلَّغۡتَ رِسَالَتَهٗ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يَعۡصِمُكَ مِنَ النَّاسِ ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يَهۡدِى الۡقَوۡمَ الۡكٰفِرِيۡنَ ۶۷

(5-67) O Messenger! Deliver what has been revealed to you from your Lord, for if you fail to do that, you have not fulfilled the task of His messenger ship. Allah will certainly protect you from the evil of men. Surely Allah will not guide the unbelievers (to succeed against you).

قُلۡ يٰٓاَهۡلَ الۡكِتٰبِ لَسۡتُمۡ عَلٰى شَىۡءٍ حَتّٰى تُقِيۡمُوا التَّوۡرٰىةَ وَالۡاِنۡجِيۡلَ وَمَاۤ اُنۡزِلَ اِلَيۡكُمۡ مِّنۡ رَّبِّكُمۡ ؕ وَلَيَزِيۡدَنَّ كَثِيۡرًا مِّنۡهُمۡ مَّاۤ اُنۡزِلَ اِلَيۡكَ مِنۡ رَّبِّكَ طُغۡيَانًا وَّكُفۡرًا ۚ فَلَا تَاۡسَ عَلَى الۡقَوۡمِ الۡكٰفِرِيۡنَ ۶۸

(5-68) Say to them: 'People of the Book! You have no solid ground to stand on unless you establish the Torah and the Gospel and all that had been revealed to you from your Lord. (97) Indeed the message revealed to you from your Lord will aggravate insurgence and unbelief in many of them. (98) So do not grieve for those who disbelieve.

(97) By 'establishing the Torah and the Gospel' is meant observing them honestly and making them the law of life.

It should be noted here that the Scriptures which comprise the Bible consist of two kinds of writings. One was composed by the Jewish and Christian authors themselves. The second consists of those portions which have been recorded as either the injunctions of God or as the utterances of Moses, Jesus and other Prophets. Such portions are those in which it has been categorically stated that God said so and so, or that a particular Prophet said so and so. If we were to exclude the portions belonging to the first category and carefully study those belonging to the second we would notice that their teachings are not perceptibly different from those of the Qur'an. It is true that the second category has not altogether escaped the tamperings of translators, scribes and exegetes, and the errors of oral transmitters. Nevertheless, one cannot help feeling that the teachings embodied in the second category call man to the same pure monotheism as the Qur'an, that they propound those very

beliefs propounded by the Qur'an and that they direct man to the same way of life as that to which the Qur'an seeks to direct him. Hence, had the Jews and the Christians adhered to the teaching attributed in their Scriptures to God and the Prophets they would certainly have become a truth-loving and truth-oriented group of people and would have been able to see in the Qur'an that very light which illuminates the earlier divine Scriptures. There would then have been no question of their abandoning their religion in order to follow the Prophet (peace be on him). To follow him would have caused neither break nor discontinuity; they would simply have gone one stage further along the same road.

(98) Instead of reflecting on this seriously and dispassionately, they were seized by a fit of intransigence which intensified their opposition.

اِنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا وَ الَّذِيۡنَ هَادُوۡا وَ الصّٰبِـُٔوۡنَ وَ النَّصٰرٰى مَنۡ اٰمَنَ بِاللّٰهِ وَ الۡيَوۡمِ الۡاٰخِرِ وَ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا فَلَا خَوۡفٌ عَلَيۡهِمۡ وَ لَا هُمۡ يَحۡزَنُوۡنَ ۝۶۹

(5-69) (Know well, none has an exclusive claim to the Truth.) For all those who believe in Allah and in the Last Day and do good deeds - be they either believers, Jews, Sabaeans or Christians - neither fear shall fall upon them, nor shall they have any reason to grieve. (99)

(99) See Towards Understanding the Qur'an, vol. I, (Surah 2, verse 62, and n 80).

لَقَدۡ اَخَذۡنَا مِيۡثَاقَ بَنِىۡۤ اِسۡرَآءِيۡلَ وَاَرۡسَلۡنَاۤ اِلَيۡهِمۡ رُسُلًا ؕ كُلَّمَا جَآءَهُمۡ رَسُوۡلٌ بِمَا لَا تَهۡوٰۤى اَنۡفُسُهُمۡ فَرِيۡقًا كَذَّبُوۡا وَفَرِيۡقًا يَّقۡتُلُوۡنَ ۞ ٧٠

(5-70) And We took a covenant from the Children of Israel and sent to them many Messengers. But whenever any Messenger brought to them something that did not suit their desires, they gave the lie to some of them and killed the others,

وَحَسِبُوۡۤا اَلَّا تَكُوۡنَ فِتۡنَةٌ فَعَمُوۡا وَصَمُّوۡا ثُمَّ تَابَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيۡهِمۡ ثُمَّ عَمُوۡا وَصَمُّوۡا كَثِيۡرٌ مِّنۡهُمۡ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ بَصِيۡرٌ بِمَا يَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ۞ ٧١

(5-71) thinking that no harm would come from it. Thus they became blind and deaf (to the Truth). Thereafter Allah turned towards them in gracious forgiveness; but many of them became even more deaf and blind (to the Truth). Allah sees all that they do.

لَقَدۡ كَفَرَ الَّذِيۡنَ قَالُوۡۤا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ هُوَ الۡمَسِيۡحُ ابۡنُ مَرۡيَمَ ؕ وَقَالَ الۡمَسِيۡحُ يٰبَنِىۡۤ اِسۡرَآءِيۡلَ اعۡبُدُوا اللّٰهَ رَبِّىۡ وَرَبَّكُمۡ ؕ اِنَّهٗ مَنۡ يُّشۡرِكۡ بِاللّٰهِ فَقَدۡ حَرَّمَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيۡهِ الۡجَنَّةَ وَمَاۡوٰىهُ النَّارُ ؕ وَمَا لِلظّٰلِمِيۡنَ مِنۡ اَنۡصَارٍ ۞ ٧٢

(5-72) And surely they disbelieved when they said: 'Christ, the son of Mary, is indeed God'; whereas Christ had said: 'Children of Israel! Serve Allah, Who is your Lord and my Lord.' Allah has forbidden Paradise to those who associate anything with Him in His divinity and their refuge shall be the Fire. No one will be able to help such wrong-doers.

لَقَدۡ كَفَرَ الَّذِيۡنَ قَالُوۡۤا اِنَّ اللّٰهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلٰثَةٍ ۘ وَمَا مِنۡ اِلٰهٍ اِلَّاۤ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ ؕ وَاِنۡ لَّمۡ يَنۡتَهُوۡا عَمَّا يَقُوۡلُوۡنَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡا مِنۡهُمۡ عَذَابٌ اَلِيۡمٌ ۞ ٧٣

(5-73) Those who said: 'Allah is one of the Three', certainly they disbelieved, for there is no god save the One God. And if they do not give up this claim, all who have disbelieved among them shall be subjected to painful chastisement.

اَفَلَا يَتُوۡبُوۡنَ اِلَى اللّٰهِ وَيَسۡتَغۡفِرُوۡنَهٗ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوۡرٌ رَّحِيۡمٌ ۞ ٧٤

(5-74) Will they not, then, turn to Allah in repentance, and ask for His forgiveness? Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.

مَا الْمَسِيْحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ اِلَّا رَسُوْلٌ ۚ قَدْ خَلَتْ مِنْ قَبْلِهِ الرُّسُلُ ۭ وَاُمُّهٗ صِدِّيْقَةٌ ۭ كَانَا يَاْكُلٰنِ الطَّعَامَ ۭ اُنْظُرْ كَيْفَ نُبَيِّنُ لَهُمُ الْاٰيٰتِ ثُمَّ انْظُرْ اَنّٰى يُؤْفَكُوْنَ ۝۷۵

(5-75) The Messiah, son of Mary, was no more than a Messenger before whom many Messengers have passed away; and his mother adhered wholly to truthfulness, and they both ate food (as other mortals do). See how We make Our signs clear to them; and see where they are turning away! (100)

(100) In these few words the Christian doctrine of the divinity of Christ is repudiated. The nature of the Messiah is clear from the indications given here; he was merely a human being. He was one born from the womb of a woman, who had a known genealogy, who possessed a physical body, who was subject to all the limitations of a human being and who had all the attributes characteristic of human beings. He slept, ate, felt the discomfort of heat and cold and was so human that he was even put to the test by Satan. How could any reasonable person believe that such a being was either God or a partner or associate of God in His godhead? But the Christians continue to insist on the divinity of the Messiah, whose life has been portrayed in their own Scriptures as that of a human. The fact of the matter is that they do not believe at all in the historical Messiah. They have woven a Messiah out of their imagination and have deified that imaginary being.

قُلْ اَتَعْبُدُوْنَ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَمْلِكُ لَكُمْ ضَرًّا وَّلَا نَفْعًا ۭ وَاللّٰهُ هُوَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ ۝۷۶

(5-76) Say: 'Do you serve, beside Allah, that which has no power either to harm or benefit you, whereas Allah alone is All-Hearing, All-Knowing?'

قُلْ يٰٓاَهْلَ الْكِتٰبِ لَا تَغْلُوْا فِيْ دِيْنِكُمْ غَيْرَ الْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعُوْٓا اَهْوَاۗءَ قَوْمٍ قَدْ ضَلُّوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ وَاَضَلُّوْا كَثِيْرًا وَّضَلُّوْا عَنْ سَوَاۗءِ السَّبِيْلِ ۝۷۷

(5-77) Say: 'People of the Book! Do not go beyond bounds in your religion at the cost of truth, and do not follow the caprices of the people who fell into error before, and caused others to go astray, and strayed far away from the right path. (101)

(101) This refers to those misguided nations from whom the Christians derived their false beliefs and ways, particularly to the Hellenistic philosophers under the spell of whose ideas the Christians had veered from the straight way they had originally followed. The beliefs of the early followers of the Messiah were mainly in conformity with the reality they had witnessed, and conformed to the teachings they had received from their guide and mentor. But they later resorted to an exaggerated veneration of Jesus, and interpreted their own beliefs in the light of the philosophical doctrines and superstitious ideas of the neighboring nations. Thus they invented an altogether new religion not even remotely related to the original teachings of the Messiah. In this connection the observations of a Christian theologian, the Reverend Charles Anderson Scott are significant. In a lengthy article entitled 'Jesus' Christ', published in the fourteenth edition of Encyclopedia Britannica, he writes:

> . . . there is nothing in these three Gospels to suggest that their writers thought of Jesus as other than human, a human being specially endowed with the Spirit of God and standing in an unbroken relation to God which justified His being spoken of as the 'Son of God'. Even Matthew refers to Him as the carpenter's son and records that after Peter had acknowledged Him as Messiah he 'took Him aside and began to rebuke Him' (Matthew, xvi. 22). And in Luke the two disciples on the way to Emmaus can still speak of Him as 'a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people' (Luke, xxiv. 19). It is very singular that in spite of the fact that before Mark was composed 'the Lord' had become the description of Jesus common among Christians, He is never so described in the second Gospel (nor yet in the first, though the word is freely used to refer to God). All three relate the Passion of Jesus with a fullness and emphasis of its great significance; but except the 'ransom' passage (Mark, x. 45) and certain words at the Last Supper there is no indication of the meaning which was

afterwards attached to it. It is not even suggested that the death of Jesus had any relation to sin or forgiveness.

A little further on he writes:

That He ranked Himself as a prophet appears from a few passages such as 'It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem'. He frequently referred to Himself as the Son of Man; but while this must be maintained in face of influential opinions to the contrary, the result for our purpose is less important than we might expect, for the possible meanings of the phrase are as numerous as the sources from which it may possibly have been derived. They range from simple 'man' through 'man in his human weakness' and the representative 'Man' to the supernatural man from heaven foreshadowed in Daniel. If we had to postulate one source and one meaning for the phrase as used by Jesus of Himself, it would probably be found in Psalm lxxx., where the poignant appeal to God for the redemption of Israel runs out on the hope of a 'son of man whom thou maddest strong for thyself. The same author adds:

Certain words of Peter spoken at the time of Pentecost, 'A man approved of God', described Jesus as He was known and regarded by His contemporaries. He was 'found in fashion as a man', that is, in all particulars which presented themselves to outward observation He Appeared and behaved as one of the human race. He 'was made man'. The Gospels leave no room for doubt as to the completeness with which these statements are to be accepted. From them we learn that Jesus passed through the natural stages of development, physical and mental, that He hungered, thirsted, was weary and slept, that He could be surprised and require information, that He suffered pain and died. He not only made no claim to omniscience, He distinctly waived it. This is not to deny that He had insight such as no other ever had, into human nature, into the hearts of men and the purposes and methods of God. But there is no reason to suppose that He thought of the earth as other than the centre of the solar system, of any other than David as the author of the Psalms, or did not share the belief of His age that demons were the cause of

disease. Indeed, any claim to omniscience would be not only inconsistent with the whole impression created by the Gospels, it could not be reconciled with the cardinal experiences of the Temptation, of Gethsemane and of Calvary. Unless such experiences were to be utterly unreal, Jesus must have entered into them and passed through them under the ordinary limitations of human knowledge, subject only to such modifications of human knowledge as might be due to prophetic insight or the sure vision of God.

There is still less reason to predicate omnipotence of Jesus. There is no indication that He ever acted independently of God, or as an independent God. Rather does He acknowledge dependence upon God, by His habit of prayer and in such words as 'this kind goeth not forth save by prayer'. He even repudiates the ascription to Himself of goodness in the absolute sense in which it belongs to God alone. It is a remarkable testimony to the truly historical character of these Gospels that though they were not finally set down until the Christian Church had begun to look up to the risen Christ as to a Divine Being, the records on the one hand preserve all the evidence of His true humanity and on the other nowhere suggest that He thought of Himself as God.

The same author also observes that:

He proclaimed that at and through the Resurrection Jesus had been publicly installed as Son of God with power; and if the phrase has not wholly lost its official Messianic connotation, it certainly includes a reference to the personal Sonship, which Paul elsewhere makes clear by speaking of Him as God's 'own Son' .

It may not be possible to decide whether it was the primitive community or Paul himself who first put full religious content into the title 'Lord' as used of Christ. Probably it was the former. But the Apostle undoubtedly adopted the title in its full meaning, and did much to make that meaning clear by transferring to 'the Lord Jesus Christ' many of the ideas and phrases which in the Old Testament had been specifically assigned to the Lord Jehovah. God 'gave unto Him that name that

is above every name - the name of "Lord"'. At the same time by equating Christ with the Wisdom of God and with the Glory of God, as well as ascribing to Him Sonship in an absolute sense, Paul claimed for Jesus Christ a relation to God which was inherent and unique, ethical and personal, eternal. While, however, Paul in many ways and in many aspects, equated Christ with God, he definitely stopped short of speaking of him as 'God'.

In another article in Encyclopedia Britannica (xiv edition), under the title 'Christianity', the Reverend George William Knox writes as follows about the fundamental beliefs of the Church:

Its molds of thought are those of Greek philosophy, and into these were run the Jewish teachings. We have thus a peculiar combination - the religious doctrines of the Bible, as culminating in the person of Jesus, run through the forms of an alien philosophy.

The Doctrine of the Trinity. The Jewish sources furnished the terms Father, Son and Spirit. Jesus seldom employed the last term and Paul's use of it is not altogether clear. Already in Jewish literature it had been all but personified (Cf. the Wisdom of Solomon). Thus the material is Jewish, though already doubtless modified by Greek influence: but the problem is Greek; it is not primarily ethical nor even religious, but it is metaphysical. What is the ontological relationship between these three factors? The answer of the Church is given in the Nicene formula, which is characteristically Greek, . . .

Also significant in this connection are the following passages of another article in Encyclopedia Britannica (xiv edition), entitled 'Church History': The recognition of Christ as the incarnation of the Logos was practically universal before the close of the 3rd century, but His deity was still widely denied, and the Arian controversy which distracted the Church of the 4th century concerned the latter question. At the Council of Nicaea in 325 the deity of Christ received official sanction and was given formulation in the original Nicene Creed. Controversy continued for some time, but finally the Nicene decision was recognized

both in East and West as the only orthodox faith. The deity of the Son was believed to carry with it that of the Spirit, who was associated with Father and Son in the baptismal formula and in the current symbols, and so the victory of the Nicene Christology meant the recognition of the doctrine of Trinity as part of the orthodox faith. The assertion of the deity of the Son incarnate in Christ raised another problem which constituted the subject of dispute in the Christological controversies of the 4th and following centuries. What is the relation of the divine and human natures in Christ? At the Council of Chalcedon in 451 it was declared that in the person of Christ are united two complete natures, divine and human, which retain after the union all their properties unchanged. This was supplemented at the 3rd Council of Constantinople in 680 by the statement that each of the natures contains a will, so that Christ possesses two wills. The Western Church accepted the decisions of Nicaea, Chalcedon and Constantinople, and so the doctrines of the Trinity and of the two natures in Christ were handed down as orthodox dogma in West as well as East.

Meanwhile in the Western Church the subject of sin and grace, and the relation of divine and human activity in salvation, received special attention; and finally, at the 2nd Council of Orange in 529, after both Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism had been repudiated, a moderate form of Augustinianism was adopted, involving the theory that every man as a result of the Fall is in such a condition that he can take no steps in the direction of salvation until he has been renewed by the divine grace given in baptism, and that he cannot continue in the good thus begun except by the constant assistance of that grace, which is mediated only by the Catholic Church.

It is evident from these statements of Christian scholars that it was exaggerated love and veneration of Christ which led the early Christians astray. This exaggeration and the use of expressions such as 'Lord' and 'Son of God' led to Jesus being invested with divine attributes and to the peculiar Christian notion of redemption, even though these could not be accommodated into the body of the teachings of Christ. When the Christians

came to be infected with philosophical doctrines, they did not abandon the original error into which they had fallen, but tried to accommodate the errors of their predecessors through apologetics and rational explanations. Thus, instead of returning to the true teachings of Christ, they used logic and philosophy to fabricate one false doctrine after another. It is to this error that the Qur'an calls the Christians' attention in these verses.

لُعِنَ الَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡا مِنۡۢ بَنِىۡۤ اِسۡرَآءِيۡلَ عَلٰى لِسَانِ دَاوٗدَ وَ عِيۡسَى ابۡنِ مَرۡيَمَ ؕ ذٰلِكَ بِمَا عَصَوۡا وَّ كَانُوۡا يَعۡتَدُوۡنَ ۷۸

(5-78) Those of the Children of Israel who took to unbelief have been cursed by the tongue of David and Jesus, son of Mary, for they rebelled and exceeded the bounds of right.

كَانُوا لَا يَتَنَاهَوْنَ عَنْ مُّنكَرٍ فَعَلُوهُ ۚ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ﴿٧٩﴾

(5-79) They did not forbid each other from committing the abominable deeds they committed. (102) Indeed what they did was evil.

(102) The corruption of any nation begins with that of a few individuals. If the collective conscience of that nation is alive, the pressure of public opinion keeps those persons in check and prevents the nation as a whole from becoming corrupted. But if instead of censuring such individuals, the nation leaves them free to behave corruptly, the corruption originally confined to a few continues to spread till it engulfs the whole nation. It was this which ultimately caused the degeneration of Israel. (For the curse against Israel in the words of David and Jesus see Psalms 10, 50 and Matthew 23.)

تَرَىٰ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ يَتَوَلَّوْنَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا ۚ لَبِئْسَ مَا قَدَّمَتْ لَهُمْ أَنفُسُهُمْ أَن سَخِطَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمْ وَفِي الْعَذَابِ هُمْ خَالِدُونَ ﴿٨٠﴾

(5-80) And now you can see many of them taking the unbelievers (instead of the believers) for their allies. Indeed they have prepared evil for themselves. Allah is angry with them, and they shall abide in chastisement.

وَلَوْ كَانُوا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالنَّبِيِّ وَمَا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْهِ مَا اتَّخَذُوهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءَ وَلَٰكِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ فَاسِقُونَ ﴿٨١﴾

(5-81) For had they truly believed in Allah and the Messenger and what was sent down to him, they would not have taken unbelievers (instead of believers) for their allies. (103) But many of them have rebelled against Allah altogether.

(103) It seems natural that those who believe in God and the Prophets and the Scriptures, compared with the polytheists, would naturally be more sympathetic to those who at least share with them belief in God, in prophethood and in .revelation (whatever their disagreements on other religious issues). It was ironic, therefore, that the Jews should openly support the

polytheists in the struggle between polytheism and monotheism, and that their sympathies in the conflict between those who rejected prophethood and those who believed in it should lie expressly with the former. Despite all this, they brazenly claimed to be true believers in God, in the Prophets and in the Scriptures.

لَتَجِدَنَّ اَشَدَّ النَّاسِ عَدَاوَةً لِّلَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوا الۡيَهُوۡدَ وَ الَّذِيۡنَ اَشۡرَكُوۡا ۚ وَ لَتَجِدَنَّ اَقۡرَبَهُمۡ مَّوَدَّةً لِّلَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوا الَّذِيۡنَ قَالُوۡۤا اِنَّا نَصٰرٰى ؕ ذٰلِكَ بِاَنَّ مِنۡهُمۡ قِسِّيۡسِيۡنَ وَ رُهۡبَانًا وَّ اَنَّهُمۡ لَا يَسۡتَكۡبِرُوۡنَ ﴿۸۲﴾

(5-82) Of all men you will find the Jews and those who associate others with Allah in His divinity to be the most hostile to those who believe; and you will surely find that of ail people they who say: 'We are Christians', are closest to feeling affection for those who believe. This is because there are worshipful priests and monks among them, and because they are not arrogant.

وَ اِذَا سَمِعُوۡا مَاۤ اُنۡزِلَ اِلَى الرَّسُوۡلِ تَرٰۤى اَعۡيُنَهُمۡ تَفِيۡضُ مِنَ الدَّمۡعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوۡا مِنَ الۡحَقِّ ۚ يَقُوۡلُوۡنَ رَبَّنَاۤ اٰمَنَّا فَاكۡتُبۡنَا مَعَ الشّٰهِدِيۡنَ ﴿۸۳﴾

(5-83) And when they hear what has been revealed to the Messenger you see that their eyes overflow with tears because of the Truth that they recognize and they say: 'Our Lord! We do believe; write us down, therefore, with those who bear witness (to the Truth).

وَ مَا لَنَا لَا نُؤۡمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَ مَا جَآءَنَا مِنَ الۡحَقِّ ۙ وَ نَطۡمَعُ اَنۡ يُّدۡخِلَنَا رَبُّنَا مَعَ الۡقَوۡمِ الصّٰلِحِيۡنَ ﴿۸۴﴾

(5-84) And why should we not believe in Allah and the Truth which has come down to us when we do fervently desire that our Lord include us among the righteous?'

فَاَثَابَهُمُ اللّٰهُ بِمَا قَالُوۡا جَنّٰتٍ تَجۡرِىۡ مِنۡ تَحۡتِهَا الۡاَنۡهٰرُ خٰلِدِيۡنَ فِيۡهَا ؕ وَ ذٰلِكَ جَزَآءُ الۡمُحۡسِنِيۡنَ ﴿۸۵﴾

(5-85) So Allah rewarded them for these words with Gardens beneath which rivers flow so that they would abide there forever. Such is the reward of the people who do good.

وَ الَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡا وَ كَذَّبُوۡا بِاٰيٰتِنَاۤ اُولٰٓئِكَ اَصۡحٰبُ الۡجَحِيۡمِ ﴿۸۶﴾

(5-86) Those who disbelieved and gave the lie to Our signs are rightfully the inmates of the Blazing Flame.

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا لَا تُحَرِّمُوۡا طَيِّبٰتِ مَاۤ اَحَلَّ اللّٰهُ لَكُمۡ وَ لَا تَعۡتَدُوۡا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الۡمُعۡتَدِيۡنَ ﴿۸۷﴾

(5-87) Believers! Do not hold as unlawful the good things which Allah has made lawful to you, [104] and do not exceed the bounds of right. [105] Allah does not love those who transgress the bounds of right.

(104) This verse embodies two directives. The first is that man should not attribute to himself the authority to proclaim things either lawful or unlawful according to his own wishes. Only that which God has held to be lawful is lawful, and only that which God has declared unlawful is unlawful. If men were to declare certain things either lawful or unlawful on their own authority, they would not be following the law of God but their own laws. The second directive is that they should not adopt the course of world-renunciation and abstention from worldly pleasures as the Christian monks, Hindu mendicants, Buddhist bhikshus and illuminist mystics did. Religious-minded and virtuous people have always tended to consider their physical and carnal desires an

impediment to spiritual growth. They have considered suffering, deprivation from worldly pleasures and abstention from the means of worldly sustenance to be acts of goodness and indispensable for achieving proximity to God. Even some of the Companions leaned in this direction. The Prophet (peace be on him) once came to know that some Companions had resolved that they would fast without interruption, that instead of spending the night on their beds they would remain awake praying, that they would consume neither meat nor fat, and would have no (sexual) relations with women. The Prophet (peace be on him) addressed the people on this subject and said: 'I have not been commanded to do so. Even your own self has rights against you. So, fast on certain days and refrain from fasting on others. Stay awake praying at night and also sleep. Look at me; 1 sleep as well as stay awake (praying); sometimes I fast and sometimes I don't. I consume meat as well as fat. Whosoever dislikes my way does not belong to me.' He then added: 'What has happened to people that they have prohibited for themselves women, good food, perfumes, sleep and the pleasures of the world, whereas I have not taught you to become monks and priests. In my religion there is neither abstention from women nor from meat, neither seclusion nor withdrawal.

For the purposes of self-control my religion has fasting. As for monasticism, all its benefits can be derived from jihad (struggle in the way of God). Serve God and associate none with Him. Perform Hajj and 'Umrah, establish Prayers, dispense Zakah and observe the fasts of Ramadan. Those who were destroyed before you were destroyed because they were severe with themselves, and when they became severe with themselves God became severe with them as well. It is the remnants of such people who you see in the oratories and hermitages of monks.' (Ibn Kathir, vol. 2, pp. 626 and 628-9 - Ed.)

There are traditions to the effect that the Prophet (peace be on him) once came to know that one of his Companions was always so preoccupied with worship and devotion that he did not approach his wife for long periods. The Prophet (peace be on him) called for him and directed him to go to his wife. On being told

that he was fasting, the Prophet (peace be on him) asked him to break the fast and proceed to his wife. During the reign of 'Umar a lady once lodged the complaint that her husband fasted all day and prayed all night and had no relations with her. 'Umar appointed the famous Successor (Tabi'i), Ka'b b. Thawr al-Azdi to look into the matter. He issued the judgement that the husband had the right to spend three nights in Prayer if he so wished, but every fourth night was the right of his wife. (Fiqh al-Sunnah, vol. 2, p. 164 - Ed.)

(105) 'Do not exceed the bounds of right' has a broad signification. To hold the things which are lawful to be unlawful, and to shun the things declared by God to be clean as if they were unclean, is in itself an act of wrongful excess. It should be remembered, at the same time, that extravagant indulgence even in clean things is an act of wrongful excess. Likewise, to overstep the limits of the permissible is also an act of wrongful excess. God disapproves of all three kinds of excess.

وَ كُلُوا مِمَّا رَزَقَكُمُ اللّٰهُ حَلٰلًا طَيِّبًا وَّ اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ الَّذِیۡۤ اَنۡتُمۡ بِهٖ مُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ﴿۵-۸۸﴾

(5-88) And partake of the lawful, good things which Allah has provided you as sustenance, and refrain from disobeying Allah in Whom you believe.

لَا يُؤَاخِذُكُمُ اللّٰهُ بِاللَّغۡوِ فِيۡۤ اَيۡمَانِكُمۡ وَ لٰكِنۡ يُّؤَاخِذُكُمۡ بِمَا عَقَّدۡتُّمُ الۡاَيۡمَانَ‌ۚ فَكَفَّارَتُهٗۤ
اِطۡعَامُ عَشَرَةِ مَسٰكِيۡنَ مِنۡ اَوۡسَطِ مَا تُطۡعِمُوۡنَ اَهۡلِيۡكُمۡ اَوۡ كِسۡوَتُهُمۡ اَوۡ تَحۡرِيۡرُ رَقَبَةٍ‌ؕ
فَمَنۡ لَّمۡ يَجِدۡ فَصِيَامُ ثَلٰثَةِ اَيَّامٍ‌ؕ ذٰلِكَ كَفَّارَةُ اَيۡمَانِكُمۡ اِذَا حَلَفۡتُمۡ‌ؕ وَ احۡفَظُوۡۤا اَيۡمَانَكُمۡ‌ؕ
كَذٰلِكَ يُبَيِّنُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمۡ اٰيٰتِهٖ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تَشۡكُرُوۡنَ ۸۹

(5-89) Allah does not take you to task for the oaths you utter vainly, but He will certainly take you to task for the oaths you have sworn in earnest. The expiation (for breaking such oaths) is either to feed ten needy persons with more or less the same food as you are wont to give to your families, or to clothe them, or to set free from bondage the neck of one man; and he who does not find the means shall fast for three days. This shall be the expiation for your oaths whenever you have sworn (and broken them.) (106) But do keep your oaths. (107) Thus does Allah make clear to you His commandments; maybe you will be grateful.

(106) Since some people had taken an oath prohibiting for themselves the things which He had permitted, God laid down this injunction regarding oaths made inadvertently. The injunction makes it unnecessary to feel bound by the terms of inadvertent oaths, and for which one will not be reproached by God. And if a person had deliberately made an oath which entails sin he should not abide by his oath and should expiate it (see Towards Understanding the Qur'an, vol. I, (Surah 2,nn. 243-4); for expiation see (Surah 4, n. 125) above.

(107) To be mindful of one's oaths has several meanings. First, one should make proper use of oaths and should not employ them either frivolously or sinfully. Second, when a person takes an oath, he should take care not to forget it lest he be led to break it. Third, when a man deliberately takes an oath regarding something sound in itself he should pay the penalty if he happens to violate it.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِنَّمَا الْخَمْرُ وَالْمَيْسِرُ وَالْاَنْصَابُ وَالْاَزْلَامُ رِجْسٌ مِّنْ عَمَلِ الشَّيْطٰنِ فَاجْتَنِبُوْهُ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُوْنَ ۝٩٠

(5-90) Believers! Intoxicants, games of chance, idolatrous sacrifices at altars, and divining arrows (108) are all abominations, the handiwork of Satan. So turn wholly away from it that you may attain to true success. (109)

(108) For 'altars' and divination by arrows see (nn.12)and 14)above. For games of chance see (n. 14) above.

While divination by arrow-shooting essentially constitutes a game of chance there is nevertheless a certain difference between the two, since divination by arrow-shooting, in addition to being a game of chance, is also tainted with polytheistic beliefs and superstitions. As for games of chance, this expression is applied to those games and acts in which accidental factors are considered the criteria for acquisition, fortune-making and the division of goods and property.

(109) In this verse four things are categorically prohibited:

(1) intoxicants;
(2) games of chance;
(3) places consecrated for the worship of anyone else besides God, and altars for either sacrifices or offerings in the name of others than God; and
(4) polytheistic divination by arrow-shooting.

The last three items have already been explained. (See Towards Understanding the Qur'an, vol. I,(Surah 2: 219, n. 235)and (Surah 5- 3, n. 14 above). Two injunctions had already been revealed concerning the prohibition of intoxicants See (Surahs 2: 219) and(4: 43). Before the revelation of the last injunction, the Prophet (peace be on him) had warned the people that intoxicants were highly displeasing to God. Hinting at the possibility of their being prohibited, he advised people to dispose of intoxicants if they had any. A little later on the present verse was revealed and the Prophet (peace be on him) then proclaimed that those who had intoxicants should

neither consume nor sell them, but rather destroy them. Intoxicating liquors were poured into the streets of Madina. When asked if such liquor might be offered to the Jews as a gift the Prophet (peace be on him) replied in the negative and said: 'He Who has prohibited it has also required it not to be given away as a gift.' Some people inquired whether it was permitted to make vinegar out of such liquor. The Prophet (peace be on him) told them not to do so, but to throw it away instead. Another person asked insistently whether or not an intoxicant could be used as medicine. The Prophet (peace be on him) replied that far from being a remedy for any malady it was in itself a malady. Others sought permission to consume intoxicating liquor on the plea that they lived in a very cold region and had to work very hard, and that the people of that region habitually drank intoxicants to combat exhaustion and cold. The Prophet (peace be on him) inquired if the drink concerned did cause intoxication. On being told that it did, he said that they should abstain from it. They pointed out that the people of their region would not accept this, to which the Prophet (peace be on him) replied that they should fight them.

It is reported by 'Abd Allah Ibn 'Umar that the Prophet (peace be on him) said: 'God has cursed khamr (wine) and him who drinks it, him who provides it to others and him who buys or sells it, him who squeezes (the grapes) into wine and him who causes others to squeeze grapes (in order to make wine), him who carries it and him to whom it is carried.' (See Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 2, p. 97; vol. 1, p. 316; Abu Da'ud, 'Ashribah', 2 - Ed.)

According to another tradition the Prophet (peace be on him) instructed not to eat at the table where intoxicating drinks were being taken. In the beginning the Prophet (peace be on him) even forbade the use of vessels in which intoxicating drinks had either been made or served. Later on, when the prohibition of drinks was completely observed the Prophet (peace be on him) withdrew the interdiction regarding the use of these vessels. (See Abu Da'ud, 'At'imah', 18; Tirmidhi, 'Adab', 43; Darimi, 'Ashribah', 15; Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 1, p. 20; vol. 3, p. 339 - Ed.) Though the word khamr in Arabic means literally 'the drink made from grapes', it was also used figuratively for intoxicating liquors made from wheat, barley,

raisins, dates and honey. The Prophet (peace be on him) applied the prohibition of wine to all intoxicants. In this regard we find categorical statements from the Prophet (peace be on him) embodied in traditions: 'Every intoxicant is khamr, and every intoxicant is prohibited.'

'Every drink which causes intoxication is prohibited.' 'I forbid everything which intoxicates.' In a Friday sermon 'Umar defined khamr in the following manner: 'Whatever takes hold of the mind is khamr.' (See Bukhari, 'Wudu", 71; 'Maghazi', 60, 'Ashribah', 4,10, 'Adab', 8, 'Ahkam', 22; Muslim, 'Ashribah', 67-9; Abu Da'ud, 'Ashribah', 5, 71; Ibn Majah, 'Ashribah', 9, 13, 14; Darimi, 'Ashribah', 8, 9; Muwatta', 'Dahaya', 8; Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 1, pp. 274, 289, 350; vol. 2, pp. 16, 158, 171, 185, 429, 501; vol. 3, pp. 63, 66, 112, 119, 361; vol. 4, pp. 41, 416; vol. 6, pp. 36, 71, 72, 97, 131, 190 and 226 - Ed.)

The Prophet (peace be on him) also enunciated the following principle: 'If anything causes intoxication when used in large quantity, even a small quantity of it is prohibited.' 'If a large quantity of something causes intoxication, to drink even a palmful of it is prohibited.' (See Abu Da'ud, 'Ashribah', 5; Ibn Majah, 'Ashribah', 10; Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 2, pp. 167, 179 and vol. 3, p. 343 - Ed.)

In the time of the Prophet (peace be on him) no specific punishment had been laid down for drinking. A person caught drunk would be struck with shoes, fists, and whips made of twisted cloth and palm sticks. The maximum number of lashes to which any culprit was subjected was forty. In the time of Abu Bakr the punishment continued to be forty lashes. In the time of 'Umar the punishment initially remained at forty lashes also, but when he saw people persist in drinking he fixed the punishment at eighty lashes after consulting the Companions. This was considered the prescribed legal punishment for drinking by Malik and Abu Hanifah, and even by Shafi'i according to one tradition. But Ahmad b. Hanbal, and, according to a variant tradition, Shafi'i, considered the punishment to consist of forty lashes, and 'Ali is reported to have preferred this opinion.

According to Islamic Law, it is the bounden duty of an Islamic government to enforce this prohibition. In the time of 'Umar the shop of a member of the Thaqif tribe, by the name of

Ruwayshid, was burnt down because he carried on the sale of liquor. On another occasion a whole hamlet was set on fire because it had become a center of illegal traffic in liquor.

اِنَّمَا يُرِيۡدُ الشَّيۡطٰنُ اَنۡ يُّوۡقِعَ بَيۡنَكُمُ الۡعَدَاوَةَ وَ الۡبَغۡضَآءَ فِى الۡخَمۡرِ وَ الۡمَيۡسِرِ وَ يَصُدَّكُمۡ عَنۡ ذِكۡرِ اللّٰهِ وَ عَنِ الصَّلٰوةِ فَهَلۡ اَنۡتُمۡ مُّنۡتَهُوۡنَ ۹۱

(5-91) By intoxicants and games of chance Satan only desires to create enmity and hatred between you, and to turn you away from the remembrance of Allah and from Prayer. Will you, then, desist?

وَ اَطِيۡعُوا اللّٰهَ وَ اَطِيۡعُوا الرَّسُوۡلَ وَ احۡذَرُوۡا ۚ فَاِنۡ تَوَلَّيۡتُمۡ فَاعۡلَمُوۡۤا اَنَّمَا عَلٰى رَسُوۡلِنَا الۡبَلٰغُ الۡمُبِيۡنُ ۹۲

(5-92) Obey Allah and obey the Messenger, and beware. But if you turn away, then know well that Our Messenger had merely to deliver the message clearly.

لَيسَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ جُنَاحٌ فِيمَا طَعِمُوٓا اِذَا مَا اتَّقَوا وَّ اٰمَنُوا وَ عَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ ثُمَّ اتَّقَوا وَّ اٰمَنُوا ثُمَّ اتَّقَوا وَّ اَحسَنُوا ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ المُحسِنِينَ ﴿۹۳﴾

(5-93) There will be no blame on those who believe and do righteous deeds for whatever they might have partaken (in the past) as long as they refrain from things prohibited, and persist in their belief and do righteous deeds, and continue to refrain from whatever is forbidden and submit to divine commandments, and persevere in doing good, fearing Allah. Allah loves those who do good.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا لَيَبلُوَنَّكُمُ اللّٰهُ بِشَيءٍ مِّنَ الصَّيدِ تَنَالُهٗٓ اَيدِيكُم وَ رِمَاحُكُم لِيَعلَمَ اللّٰهُ مَن يَّخَافُهٗ بِالغَيبِ ۚ فَمَنِ اعتَدٰى بَعدَ ذٰلِكَ فَلَهٗ عَذَابٌ اَلِيمٌ ﴿۹۴﴾

(5-94) Believers! Allah will surely try you with a game which will be within the range of your hands and lances so that He might mark out those who fear Him, even though He is beyond the reach of human perception. A painful chastisement awaits whosoever transgresses after that the bounds set by Allah.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ اٰمَنُوا لَا تَقتُلُوا الصَّيدَ وَ اَنتُم حُرُمٌ ؕ وَ مَن قَتَلَهٗ مِنكُم مُّتَعَمِّدًا فَجَزَآءٌ مِّثلُ مَا قَتَلَ مِنَ النَّعَمِ يَحكُمُ بِهٖ ذَوَا عَدلٍ مِّنكُم هَديًۢا بٰلِغَ الكَعبَةِ اَو كَفَّارَةٌ طَعَامُ مَسٰكِينَ اَو عَدلُ ذٰلِكَ صِيَامًا لِّيَذُوقَ وَبَالَ اَمرِهٖ ؕ عَفَا اللّٰهُ عَمَّا سَلَفَ ؕ وَ مَن عَادَ فَيَنتَقِمُ اللّٰهُ مِنهُ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ عَزِيزٌ ذُو انتِقَامٍ ﴿۹۵﴾

(5-95) Believers! Do not kill game while you are in the state of pilgrim sanctity. (110) Whoever of you kills it willfully there shall be a recompense, the like of what he has killed in cattle - as shall be judged by two men of equity among you - to be brought to the Kabah as an offering, or as an expiation the feeding of the needy, or its equivalent in fasting (111) in order that he may taste the grievousness of his deed. Allah has pardoned whatever has passed; but Allah will exact a penalty from him who repeats it. Allah is All-Mighty. He is fully capable of exacting penalties.

(110) When a person is in the state of pilgrim sanctity (ihram) it is prohibited for him both to hunt and to assist in hunting animals. Indeed, even if an animal has been hunted for him by someone else he may not eat it. However, if someone hunts an animal for

himself and makes a gift of it to such a person, there is no harm in his eating it. There is an exception to this injunction and that is with regard to harmful animals. Snakes, scorpions, mad dogs and other such animals which cause injury to man may be killed even by one in the state of ihram. (See Bukhari, 'Talaq', 24; 'Sayd', 2; Abu Da'ud, 'Manasik', 40, 41; Tirmidhi, 'Hajj', 27; 'Sayd', 26 - Ed.)

(111) It would also be 'two men of equity' (Surah al-Ma'idah 5- 95) to judge as to the number of persons one should feed or the number of days one should fast by way of expiation for killing a certain animal.

اُحِلَّ لَكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَحْرِ وَ طَعَامُهٗ مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَ لِلسَّيَّارَةِ ۚ وَ حُرِّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ صَيْدُ الْبَرِّ مَا دُمْتُمْ حُرُمًا ؕ وَ اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ الَّذِيْۤ اِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُوْنَ ﴿۹۶﴾

(5-96) The game of the water and eating thereof (112) are permitted to you as a provision for you (who are settled) and for those on a journey; but to hunt on land while you are in the state of Pilgrim sanctity is forbidden for you. Beware, then, of disobeying Allah to Whom you shall all be mustered.

(112) Since one often runs out of provisions during a voyage and is left with no alternative but to catch sea creatures, fishing in the sea has been made lawful.

جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ الْكَعْبَةَ الْبَيْتَ الْحَرَامَ قِيٰمًا لِّلنَّاسِ وَ الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَ الْهَدْيَ وَ الْقَلَآئِدَ ؕ ذٰلِكَ لِتَعْلَمُوْۤا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ مَا فِي الْاَرْضِ ۙ وَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيْمٌ ﴿۹۷﴾

(5-97) Allah has appointed the Kabah, the Sacred House, as a means of support for (the collective life of) men, and has caused the holy month (of Pilgrimage), and the animals of sacrificial offering and their distinguishing collars to assist therein. (113) This is so that you may know that Allah is aware of all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth; and that Allah has knowledge of everything. (114)

(113) In Arabia, the Ka'bah was not merely a sacred place of worship. Thanks to its central position and its sanctity, it nurtured the economic and cultural life of the whole peninsula. Since the entire populace was drawn towards the Kabah for the performance of Hajj and 'Umrah, their coming together brought about a measure of unity in the life of the Arabs which was otherwise rent with disunity. This enabled the people of various regions and tribes to establish social and cultural ties among themselves. Moreover, the security which reigned in the vicinity of the Kabah provided an impetus to creative literary activity, with the result that in the fairs held in the sacred territory, poets placed their poetic compositions before the audience, trying to excel one another. This led to the growth and flowering of their language and literature. Thanks, again, to the peace and security which reigned in the sacred territory, it became a major centre of trade and commerce. Moreover, since certain months of the year were regarded as sacred months in which there could be no bloodshed, the Arabs enjoyed peace and security for about a quarter of the year. It was during this period that caravans moved in freedom and with ease from one end of the peninsula to the other. The custom of consecrating animals for sacrifice, marked off from others by the collars around their necks, also facilitated the movement of caravans, for whenever the Arabs saw those animals with their collars signifying consecration for sacrifice, they-bent their heads in reverence and no predatory tribe had the courage to molest them.

(114) Were they to consider even the social and economic aspects of the life of their people, the existing arrangements would provide them with clear testimony to the fact that God has deep and thorough knowledge of the interests and requirements of His creatures, and that He can ensure immensely beneficial effects on many sectors of human life by just one single commandment. During the several centuries of anarchy and disorder which preceded the advent of the Prophet (peace be on him), the Arabs were themselves unaware of their own interests and seemed bent upon self-destruction. God, however, was aware of their needs and requirements and by merely investing the Kabah with a central position in Arabia He ensured their national

survival. Even if they disregarded innumerable other facts and reflected on this alone they would become convinced that the injunctions revealed by God were conducive to their well-being, and that underlying them were a great many benefits and advantages for them which they themselves could neither have grasped nor achieved by their own contriving.

اِعۡلَمُوۡۤا اَنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِيۡدُ الۡعِقَابِ وَ اَنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوۡرٌ رَّحِيۡمٌ ﴿۹۸﴾

(5-98) Know well that Allah is severe in retribution, and that Allah is also All-Forgiving, All-Compassionate.

مَا عَلَى الرَّسُوۡلِ اِلَّا الۡبَلٰغُ ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ يَعۡلَمُ مَا تُبۡدُوۡنَ وَ مَا تَكۡتُمُوۡنَ ﴿۹۹﴾

(5-99) The Messenger is bound only to deliver the message, whereafter Allah knows well all that you disclose and all that you conceal.

قُلۡ لَّا يَسۡتَوِى الۡخَبِيۡثُ وَ الطَّيِّبُ وَ لَوۡ اَعۡجَبَكَ كَثۡرَةُ الۡخَبِيۡثِ ۚ فَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ يٰۤاُولِى الۡاَلۡبَابِ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تُفۡلِحُوۡنَ ﴿۱۰۰﴾

(5-100) (O Messenger!) Say to them: "The bad things and the good things are not equal, even though the abundance of the bad things might make you pleased with them. (115) Men of understanding, beware of disobeying Allah; then maybe you will attain true success.'

(115) This verse enunciates a standard of evaluation and judgement quite distinct from the standards employed by superficial people. For the latter, for instance, a hundred dollars are worth more than five dollars, since a hundred is more than five. But, according to this verse, if those hundred dollars have been earned in a manner entailing the disobedience of God the entire amount becomes unclean. If, on the contrary, a man earns five dollars while obeying God then this amount is clean; and anything which is unclean, whatever its quantity, cannot be worth that which is clean. A drop of perfume is more valuable than a heap of filth; a palmful of clean water is much more valuable than a huge cauldron brimming with urine. A truly wise person should

therefore necessarily be content with whatever he acquires by clean, permissible means, however small and humble its quantity may be. He should not reach out for what is prohibited, however large in quantity and glittering in appearance.

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا لَا تَسْـَٔلُوْا عَنْ اَشْيَآءَ اِنْ تُبْدَ لَكُمْ تَسُؤْكُمْ وَ اِنْ تَسْـَٔلُوْا عَنْهَا حِيْنَ يُنَزَّلُ الْقُرْاٰنُ تُبْدَ لَكُمْ ؕ عَفَا اللّٰهُ عَنْهَا ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ حَلِيْمٌ ۝١٠١

(5-101) Believers! Do not ask of the things which, if made manifest to you, would vex you; (116) for, if you should ask about them while the Qur'an is being revealed, they will be made manifest to you. Allah has pardoned whatever happened in the past. He is All-Forgiving, All-Forbearing.

(116) People used to ask the Prophet (peace be on him) many questions which were of no practical relevance to either religious or day-to-day affairs. Once, for instance, a person asked the Prophet (peace be on him) in the presence of a crowd: 'Who is my real father?' Likewise, many people used to ask unnecessary questions about legal matters. By these uncalled for inquiries they sought knowledge of matters which had for good reasons, been deliberately left undetermined by the Law-giver. In the Qur'an, for example. Pilgrimage had been declared obligatory. A person who became aware of this came to the Prophet (peace be on him) and inquired: 'Has it been made obligatory to perform it every year?' To this the Prophet (peace be on him) made no reply. When he inquired for the second time the Prophet (peace be on him) again stayed silent. On being asked for the third time, he said: 'Pity on you! Had I uttered "Yes" in reply to your question, it would have become obligatory to perform it every year. And then you would not have been able to observe it and would have been guilty of disobedience.' (See Bukhari, 'Riqaq', 22; 'Zakah', 53; I'tisam', 3; 'Adab', 6; Muslim, 'Aqdiyah', 10, 11, 13, 14; Darimi, 'Riqaq', 38; Muwatta', 'Kalam', 20; Ahmad b. Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 2, pp. 327, 360, 367; vol. 4, pp. 246, 249, 250, 251, 255 - Ed.)

The Prophet (peace be on him) discouraged people from being over-inquisitive and unnecessarily curious about every question. We find in the Hadith the following saying from the Prophet (peace be on him): 'The worst criminal among the Muslims is the one who inquired about something which had not

been made unlawful, and then it was declared so, because of his inquiry.' (Bukhari, I'tisam', 3; Muslim, Fada'il', 132, 133; Abu Da'ud, 'Sunnah', 6 - Ed.) According to another tradition the Prophet (peace be on him) said: 'God has imposed upon you certain obligations, do not neglect them; He has imposed certain prohibitions, do not violate them; He has imposed certain limits, do not even approach them; and He has remained silent about certain matters - and has not done so out of forgetfulness - do not pursue them.' (See Towards Understanding the Qur'an, vol. I, (Surah 2, n. 110 - Ed.)

In both these traditions an important fact has been called to our attention. In matters where the Law-giver has chosen to lay down certain injunctions only broadly, without any elaborate details, or quantitative specifications, He has done so not because of neglect or forgetfulness. Such seeming omissions are deliberate, and the reason thereof is that He does not desire to place limitations upon people, but prefers to allow them latitude and ease in following His commandments. Now there are some people who make unnecessary inquiries, cause elaborately prescribed, inflexibly determined and restrictive regulations to be added to the Law. Some others, in cases where such details are in no way deducible from the text, resort to analogical reasoning, thereby turning a broad general rule into an elaborate law full of restrictive details, and an unspecified into a specified rule. Both sorts of people put Muslims in great danger. For, in the area of belief, the more detailed the doctrines to which people are required to subscribe, the more problematic it becomes to do so. Likewise, in legal matters, the greater the restriction, the greater the likelihood of violation.

قَدۡ سَاَلَهَا قَوۡمٌ مِّنۡ قَبۡلِكُمۡ ثُمَّ اَصۡبَحُوۡا بِهَا كٰفِرِيۡنَ ١٠٢

(5-102) Indeed some people before you had asked such questions and in consequence fell into unbelief. (117)

(117) Some people first indulged in hair-splitting arguments about their laws and dogma, and thereby wove a great web of credal elaborations and legal minutiae. Then they became enmeshed in this same web and thus became guilty of dogmatic

errors and the violation of their own religious laws. The people referred to here are the Jews, and the Muslims who followed in their footsteps and left no stone unturned, despite the warnings contained in the Qur'an and in the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be on him).

مَا جَعَلَ اللّٰهُ مِنۡ بَحِيۡرَةٍ وَّلَا سَآئِبَةٍ وَّ لَا وَصِيۡلَةٍ وَّ لَا حَامٍ وَّ لٰكِنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡا يَفۡتَرُوۡنَ
عَلَى اللّٰهِ الۡكَذِبَ ؕ وَ اَكۡثَرُهُمۡ لَا يَعۡقِلُوۡنَ ۱۰۳

(5-103) Allah has neither appointed (cattle devoted to idols such as) Bahirah, Sa'ibah, Wasilah nor Ham; (118) but those who disbelieve forge lies against Allah and of them most have no understanding (and therefore succumb to such superstitions).

(118) Just as, in the Indian subcontinent, cows, oxen and goats are set free after being consecrated either to God or to some idol or shrine or to some saintly person, and just as people consider it prohibited either to put them to work, to slaughter them or to derive any other kind of benefit from them, so the Arabs of the Jahiliyah period also let loose certain animals after consecrating them. Such animals were variously named.

Bahirah was the name of a female camel which had already borne five young, the last of which was a male. The practice was to slit the ear of such a camel and then let her loose. Thereafter no one could ride her, use her milk, slaughter her or shear her hair. She was entitled to graze and drink water wherever she liked.

Sa'ibah was the name of either a male or female camel which had been let loose after consecration as a mark of gratitude in fulfilment of a vow taken for either the recovery from some ailment or delivery from some danger. In the same way the female camel which had borne ten times, and each time a female, was also let loose.

Wasilah. If the first kid born to a goat was a male, it was slaughtered in the name of the deities; but if it was a female, it

was kept by the owners for themselves. If twins were born and one of them was a male and the other a female goat, the male was not slaughtered but rather let loose in the name of the deities. This male goat was called wasilah.

Ham. If the young of camels in the second degree of descent had become worthy of riding they were let loose. Likewise, if ten offspring had been borne by a female camel she was also let loose, and called ham.

وَ اِذَا قِيۡلَ لَهُمۡ تَعَالَوۡا اِلٰى مَاۤ اَنۡزَلَ اللّٰهُ وَ اِلَى الرَّسُوۡلِ قَالُوۡا حَسۡبُنَا مَا وَجَدۡنَا عَلَيۡهِ اٰبَآءَنَا ؕ
اَوَ لَوۡ كَانَ اٰبَآؤُهُمۡ لَا يَعۡلَمُوۡنَ شَيۡـًٔا وَّ لَا يَهۡتَدُوۡنَ ۱۰۴

(5-104) When they are asked: 'Come to what Allah has revealed, and come to the Messenger', they reply: 'The way of our fathers suffices us.' (Will they continue to follow their forefathers) even though their forefathers might have known nothing, and might have been on the wrong way?

يٰۤاَيُّهَا الَّذِيۡنَ اٰمَنُوۡا عَلَيۡكُمۡ اَنۡفُسَكُمۡ ۚ لَا يَضُرُّكُمۡ مَّنۡ ضَلَّ اِذَا اهۡتَدَيۡتُمۡ ؕ اِلَى اللّٰهِ مَرۡجِعُكُمۡ
جَمِيۡعًا فَيُنَبِّئُكُمۡ بِمَا كُنۡتُمۡ تَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ۱۰۵

(5-105) Believers! Take heed of your own selves. If you are rightly guided, the error of he who strays will not harm you. (119) To Allah will all of you return; then He will let all of you know what you did.

(119) What is stressed here is that rather than occupying himself unduly with examining faults in the belief and conduct of others, a man should pay greater attention to a critical examination of his own conduct. His primary concern should be with his own faith and conduct. If a man is himself obedient to God, observes his duties to Him and to His creatures including his duty to promote what is good and forbid what is evil, and lives according to the dictates of righteousness and honesty, he has fulfilled his obligation and if others persist either in false beliefs or in moral corruption their errors cannot harm him.

This verse in no way means that a man should care only

for his own salvation and should remain unconcerned with the reform of others. Abu Bakr removed this misconception in one of his sermons when he remarked: 'You recite this verse but interpret it erroneously. I have heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be on him) say that when people see corruption but do not try to change it; and when they see a wrong-doer commit wrong but do not prevent him from doing so, it is not unlikely that God's chastisement will seize them all. By God, it is incumbent upon you that you bid what is good and forbid what is evil or else God will grant domination upon you to those who are the worst among you. They will greatly chastise you and then when your righteous ones pray to God, their prayers will not be answered.'

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا شَهَادَةُ بَيْنِكُمْ اِذَا حَضَرَ اَحَدَكُمُ الْمَوْتُ حِيْنَ الْوَصِيَّةِ اثْنٰنِ ذَوَا عَدْلٍ مِّنْكُمْ
اَوْ اٰخَرٰنِ مِنْ غَيْرِكُمْ اِنْ اَنْتُمْ ضَرَبْتُمْ فِى الْاَرْضِ فَاَصَابَتْكُمْ مُّصِيْبَةُ الْمَوْتِ ۭ تَحْبِسُوْنَهُمَا
مِنْۢ بَعْدِ الصَّلٰوةِ فَيُقْسِمٰنِ بِاللّٰهِ اِنِ ارْتَبْتُمْ لَا نَشْتَرِيْ بِهٖ ثَمَنًا وَّلَوْ كَانَ ذَا قُرْبٰى ۙ وَلَا
نَكْتُمُ شَهَادَةَ اللّٰهِ اِنَّآ اِذًا لَّمِنَ الْاٰثِمِيْنَ ١٠٦

(5-106) Believers! When death approaches you, let two men of equity among you act as witnesses when you make your bequest; (120) or let two of those from others than yourselves act as witnesses if you are on a journey when the affliction of death befalls you. (121) Then if any doubt occurs you shall detain both of them (in the mosque) after the Prayer, and they shall swear by Allah: 'We shall neither sell our testimony in return for any gain even though it concerns any near of kin nor shall we conceal our testimony which we owe to Allah, for then we should become among sinners.'

(120) That is, pious, straightforward and trustworthy Muslims.

That is, non-Muslims - Ed.

(121) This shows that the testimony of non-Muslim witnesses in cases involving Muslims is appropriate only when no Muslim is available as a witness.

فَاِنۡ عُثِرَ عَلٰۤی اَنَّهُمَا اسۡتَحَقَّاۤ اِثۡمًا فَاٰخَرٰنِ یَقُوۡمٰنِ مَقَامَهُمَا مِنَ الَّذِیۡنَ اسۡتَحَقَّ عَلَیۡهِمُ الۡاَوۡلَیٰنِ فَیُقۡسِمٰنِ بِاللّٰهِ لَشَهَادَتُنَاۤ اَحَقُّ مِنۡ شَهَادَتِهِمَا وَ مَا اعۡتَدَیۡنَاۤ ۫ اِنَّاۤ اِذًا لَّمِنَ الظّٰلِمِیۡنَ ﴿۱۰۷﴾

(5-107) Then if it is discovered later that the two are guilty of such sin, then two others shall stand in their place from among those against whom the two had sinfully deposed, and swear by Allah: 'Our testimony is truer than the testimony of the other two, and we have not transgressed in our statement; for then indeed we would become wrong-doers.'

ذٰلِکَ اَدۡنٰۤی اَنۡ یَّاۡتُوۡا بِالشَّهَادَةِ عَلٰی وَجۡهِهَاۤ اَوۡ یَخَافُوۡۤا اَنۡ تُرَدَّ اَیۡمَانٌۢ بَعۡدَ اَیۡمَانِهِمۡ ؕ وَ اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ وَ اسۡمَعُوۡا ؕ وَ اللّٰهُ لَا یَهۡدِی الۡقَوۡمَ الۡفٰسِقِیۡنَ ﴿۱۰۸﴾

(5-108) Thus it is more likely that they will either bear the right testimony or else they will at least fear that their oaths may be rebutted by other oaths. Have fear of Allah and pay heed. Allah does not direct the disobedient to the right way.

یَوۡمَ یَجۡمَعُ اللّٰهُ الرُّسُلَ فَیَقُوۡلُ مَاذَاۤ اُجِبۡتُمۡ ؕ قَالُوۡا لَا عِلۡمَ لَنَا ؕ اِنَّکَ اَنۡتَ عَلَّامُ الۡغُیُوۡبِ ﴿۱۰۹﴾

(5-109) The Day [122] when Allah will gather together the Messengers [123] and say: 'What answer were you given?' They will reply: 'We have no real knowledge of it. [124] You alone fully know all that lies beyond the reach of human perception.

(122) This refers to the Day of Judgement.

(123) The reference here is to the response of the world to the call of the Prophets.

(124) This reply indicates that the Prophets would say that their knowledge was confined to that limited, outward response which they had encountered during their lifetimes. The true reaction to their call at various places and in different forms would only be known completely to God Himself.

إِذۡ قَالَ ٱللَّهُ يَٰعِيسَى ٱبۡنَ مَرۡيَمَ ٱذۡكُرۡ نِعۡمَتِي عَلَيۡكَ وَعَلَىٰ وَٰلِدَتِكَ إِذۡ أَيَّدتُّكَ بِرُوحِ ٱلۡقُدُسِ تُكَلِّمُ ٱلنَّاسَ فِي ٱلۡمَهۡدِ وَكَهۡلٗاۖ وَإِذۡ عَلَّمۡتُكَ ٱلۡكِتَٰبَ وَٱلۡحِكۡمَةَ وَٱلتَّوۡرَىٰةَ وَٱلۡإِنجِيلَۖ وَإِذۡ تَخۡلُقُ مِنَ ٱلطِّينِ كَهَيۡـَٔةِ ٱلطَّيۡرِ بِإِذۡنِي فَتَنفُخُ فِيهَا فَتَكُونُ طَيۡرَۢا بِإِذۡنِيۖ وَتُبۡرِئُ ٱلۡأَكۡمَهَ وَٱلۡأَبۡرَصَ بِإِذۡنِيۖ وَإِذۡ تُخۡرِجُ ٱلۡمَوۡتَىٰ بِإِذۡنِيۖ وَإِذۡ كَفَفۡتُ بَنِيٓ إِسۡرَٰٓءِيلَ عَنكَ إِذۡ جِئۡتَهُم بِٱلۡبَيِّنَٰتِ فَقَالَ ٱلَّذِينَ كَفَرُواْ مِنۡهُمۡ إِنۡ هَٰذَآ إِلَّا سِحۡرٞ مُّبِينٞ ١١٠

(5-110) Imagine, then, when Allah will say: (125) 'Jesus, son of Mary, recall My favor upon you and your mother, and when I strengthened you with the spirit of holiness so that you talked to men in the cradle and also when you became of age; and when I taught you the Book and Wisdom, and the Torah and the Gospel; and when, by My leave, you fashioned from clay the likeness of a bird and you breathed into it, and by My leave it became a bird; you healed, by My leave, the blind from birth and the leprous; and when, by My leave, you caused the dead to come to life. (126) And recall when I restrained the Israelites from you when you came to them with clear proofs whereupon those of them who disbelieved said: "This is nothing but clear magic."

(125) The initial question would be addressed to all Prophets as such. Then each of them would be called upon to bear witness separately, as stated in several places in the Qur'an. In this connection the question that will be addressed to Jesus is specifically mentioned here.

(126) That is, with God's command Jesus brought people to life from the state of death.

وَإِذۡ أَوۡحَيۡتُ إِلَى ٱلۡحَوَارِيِّـۧنَ أَنۡ ءَامِنُواْ بِي وَبِرَسُولِي قَالُوٓاْ ءَامَنَّا وَٱشۡهَدۡ بِأَنَّنَا مُسۡلِمُونَ ١١١

(5-111) And recall when I revealed to the disciples to believe in Me and in My Messenger, they said: "We do believe, and we bear witness that we indeed are the ones who submit to Allah" (127)

(127) Jesus is being told that the faith of the disciples in him was also the result of God's grace and succor, for he, himself, did not have the power to produce even one man of faith in that land of

disbelief. It is also made clear that the true religion of the disciples of Jesus was Islam.

اِذۡ قَالَ الۡحَوَارِيُّوۡنَ يٰعِيۡسَى ابۡنَ مَرۡيَمَ هَلۡ يَسۡتَطِيۡعُ رَبُّكَ اَنۡ يُّنَزِّلَ عَلَيۡنَا مَآئِدَةً مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ ؕ قَالَ اتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ اِنۡ كُنۡتُمۡ مُّؤۡمِنِيۡنَ ١١٢

(5-112) Also recall when the disciples asked Jesus, (128) son of Mary: 'Jesus, son of Mary, has your Lord the power to send down to us a repast from the heaven?' There- upon Jesus said: 'Fear Allah if you do indeed have faith.'

(128) Since the disciples have been mentioned here, the continuity of the subject is interrupted momentarily in order to introduce another incident connected with the disciples. This clearly shows that those who had been directly instructed by Jesus considered him merely a human being and a slave of God; they had no conception of their master either being God or a partner of God or the son of God. Jesus had, rather, presented himself to them as a slave of God with no claims to divine authority.

One might feel inclined here to raise the question: What is the occasion for this parenthetical interjection in a conversation that is to take place on the Day of Judgement? This parenthesis, in my opinion, is not in fact part of such a conversation, but rather forms part of a discussion in this world regarding a conversation that will take place on the Day of Judgement. The conversation that will take place on the Day of Judgement is mentioned here precisely in order that the Christians may derive a lesson from it and direct themselves to the right way. Hence, the mention of this incident regarding the disciples - even though it seems to interrupt the continuity of narration - is in no sense out of place. That is, are Muslims - Ed.

قَالُوۡا نُرِيۡدُ اَنۡ نَّاۡكُلَ مِنۡهَا وَتَطۡمَئِنَّ قُلُوۡبُنَا وَنَعۡلَمَ اَنۡ قَدۡ صَدَقۡتَنَا وَنَكُوۡنَ عَلَيۡهَا مِنَ الشّٰهِدِيۡنَ ١١٣

(5-113) They said: 'We desire to partake of it that our hearts be satisfied and we know that you did speak the truth to us, and that we are its witnesses.'

قَالَ عِيسَى ابۡنُ مَرۡيَمَ اللّٰهُمَّ رَبَّنَاۤ اَنۡزِلۡ عَلَيۡنَا مَآئِدَةً مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ تَكُوۡنُ لَنَا عِيۡدًا لِّاَوَّلِنَا وَاٰخِرِنَا وَاٰيَةً مِّنۡكَ وَارۡزُقۡنَا وَاَنۡتَ خَيۡرُ الرّٰزِقِيۡنَ ﴿۱۱۴﴾

(5-114) Jesus, son of Mary, then prayed: 'O Allah, our Lord, send down to us a repast from the heavens that shall be a festival for the first of us and for the last of us, and a sign from You. And provide us with sustenance, for You are the best Provider of sustenance.'

قَالَ اللّٰهُ اِنِّىۡ مُنَزِّلُهَا عَلَيۡكُمۡ ۚ فَمَنۡ يَّكۡفُرۡ بَعۡدُ مِنۡكُمۡ فَاِنِّىۡۤ اُعَذِّبُهٗ عَذَابًا لَّاۤ اُعَذِّبُهٗۤ اَحَدًا مِّنَ الۡعٰلَمِيۡنَ ﴿۱۱۵﴾

(5-115) Allah said: 'I shall indeed send it down to you;[129] then, I shall afflict whoever among you who disbelieves with a chastisement wherewith I will afflict none in the worlds.'

(129) The Qur'an is silent on the question of whether this meal was sent down in response to this prayer. There is also no other authoritative basis to help us arrive at a clear conclusion. It is possible that the repast was actually sent down. It is also possible that the disciples withdrew their prayer after hearing the stern warning in response to it.

وَاِذۡ قَالَ اللّٰهُ يٰعِيۡسَى ابۡنَ مَرۡيَمَ ءَاَنۡتَ قُلۡتَ لِلنَّاسِ اتَّخِذُوۡنِىۡ وَاُمِّىَ اِلٰهَيۡنِ مِنۡ دُوۡنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ قَالَ سُبۡحٰنَكَ مَا يَكُوۡنُ لِىۡۤ اَنۡ اَقُوۡلَ مَا لَيۡسَ لِىۡ ۢ بِحَقٍّ ؕ اِنۡ كُنۡتُ قُلۡتُهٗ فَقَدۡ عَلِمۡتَهٗ ؕ تَعۡلَمُ مَا فِىۡ نَفۡسِىۡ وَلَاۤ اَعۡلَمُ مَا فِىۡ نَفۡسِكَ ؕ اِنَّكَ اَنۡتَ عَلَّامُ الۡغُيُوۡبِ ﴿۱۱۶﴾

(5-116) And imagine when thereafter Allah will say: 'Jesus, son of Mary, did you say to people: "Take me and my mother for gods beside Allah?" (130) and he will answer: "Glory to You! It was not for me to say what I had no right to. Had I said so, You would surely have known it. You know all what is within my mind whereas I do not know what is within Yours. You, indeed You, know fully all that is beyond the reach of human perception.

(130) The Christians were not content merely with deifying Jesus and the Holy Spirit. They even turned Mary, the mother of Jesus, into a full-fledged object of worship. The Bible does not contain even the remotest suggestion that Mary was in any way either divine or superhuman. During the first three centuries after the Messiah, such a concept was totally alien to Christian thinking. Towards the end of the third century of the Christian era, however, some theologians of Alexandria employed, for the first time, the expression 'Mother of God' in connection with Mary. Subsequently, belief in Mary's divinity and the practice of Mariolatry began to spread among Christians. Even then, however, the Church was not prepared to accord official approval to this belief and denounced the Mariolaters as heretics. It was not until the Council of Ephesus in 431 that the Church officially used the expression 'Mother of God' for Mary. The result was that Mariolatry began to spread fast within the Church itself, so much so that, by the time of the revelation of the Qur'an, Mary had become so important a deity that she obscured even the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Statues of Mary adorned the cathedrals. She became the object of rites and worship. People addressed their prayers to her. She was regarded as the one who responded to people's supplications, who heeded people's grievances and complaints, who relieved them in distress, who provided support and succor to the helpless. For a devout Christian there could be no greater source of comfort and inner strength than the belief that he enjoyed the support and patronage of the 'Mother of God'. In the preamble of his code, Justinian had declared Mary to be the defender and supporter of his empire, and his general, Marses, sought Mary's guidance on the battlefield. Heraclius, a contemporary of the Prophet (peace be on him), had a picture of Mary on his standard and he was confident that by her grace the standard would never be lowered. Several centuries later the Protestants argued strongly against Mariolatry during the movement which led to the Reformation. The Roman Catholic Church has, nevertheless, managed so far to cling to Mariolatry in one form or another.

مَا قُلۡتُ لَهُمۡ اِلَّا مَاۤ اَمَرۡتَنِىۡ بِهٖۤ اَنِ اعۡبُدُوا اللّٰهَ رَبِّىۡ وَرَبَّكُمۡ‌ۚ وَكُنۡتُ عَلَيۡهِمۡ شَهِيۡدًا مَّا دُمۡتُ فِيۡهِمۡ‌ۚ فَلَمَّا تَوَفَّيۡتَنِىۡ كُنۡتَ اَنۡتَ الرَّقِيۡبَ عَلَيۡهِمۡ‌ؕ وَاَنۡتَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَىۡءٍ شَهِيۡدٌ ۝١١٧

(5-117) I said to them nothing except what You commanded me, that is: 'Serve Allah, my Lord and your Lord.' I watched over them as long as I remained among them; and when You did recall me, then You Yourself became the Watcher over them. Indeed, You are Witness over everything.

اِنۡ تُعَذِّبۡہُمۡ فَاِنَّہُمۡ عِبَادُکَ ۚ وَ اِنۡ تَغۡفِرۡ لَہُمۡ فَاِنَّکَ اَنۡتَ الۡعَزِیۡزُ الۡحَکِیۡمُ ﴿۱۱۸﴾

(5-118) If You chastise them, they are Your servants; and if You forgive them, You are the All-Mighty, the All-Wise."

قَالَ اللّٰہُ ہٰذَا یَوۡمُ یَنۡفَعُ الصّٰدِقِیۡنَ صِدۡقُہُمۡ ؕ لَہُمۡ جَنّٰتٌ تَجۡرِیۡ مِنۡ تَحۡتِہَا الۡاَنۡہٰرُ خٰلِدِیۡنَ فِیۡہَاۤ اَبَدًا ؕ رَضِیَ اللّٰہُ عَنۡہُمۡ وَ رَضُوۡا عَنۡہُ ؕ ذٰلِکَ الۡفَوۡزُ الۡعَظِیۡمُ ﴿۱۱۹﴾

(5-119) Thereupon Allah will say: 'This day truthfulness shall profit the truthful. For them are Gardens beneath which rivers flow. There they will abide forever. Allah is well- pleased with them, and they well-pleased with Allah. That indeed is the mighty triumph.'

لِلّٰہِ مُلۡکُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ وَ مَا فِیۡہِنَّ ؕ وَ ہُوَ عَلٰی کُلِّ شَیۡءٍ قَدِیۡرٌ ﴿۱۲۰﴾٪

(5-120) To Allah belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth and all that is in them and He has full power over everything.